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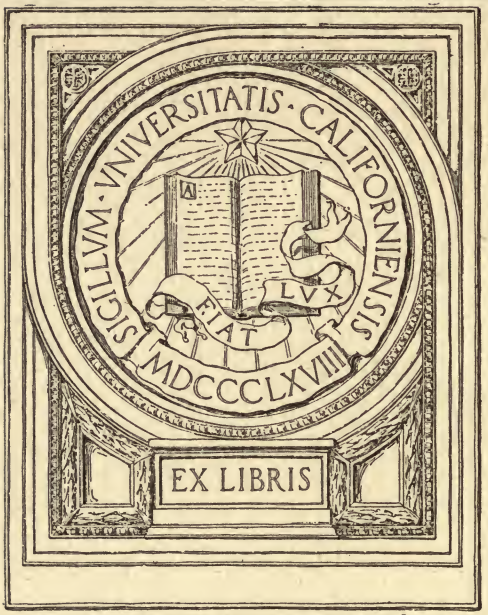
THE WAY OF HONOUR

H. CARTON DE WIART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THE WAY OF HONOUR

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BY

H. CARTON DE WIART

BELGIAN MINISTER OF JUSTICE

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.
RUSKIN HOUSE 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C. 1

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First published in 1918

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PREFACE

THERE is nothing simpler than the position of Belgium in the present war. Faced, on the 2nd of August 1914 with the choice between what her own immediate interests seemed to dictate and what honour demanded, she did not hesitate. Since then all that she has lost and suffered, all that she still suffers every day, she has lost and suffered through loyalty to her duty.

Nothing simpler. But nothing, on the other hand, more splendid. The cause of this country lost, upon that day, its purely national character. To use M. Paul Deschanel's words, Belgium has become " the pledge of International Righteousness." How are we to conceive that peace should ever again be mutually agreed upon by the nations of the earth, that is to say, that treaties and agreements should ever henceforth be made between them, unless, first of all, faith in the given word, which has been betrayed and shaken by the flagrant violation of Belgium's rights, shall have been restored to the world by the punishment of that violation ?

To take an even higher standpoint, is it not certain that the very conception of morality would be for

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ever damaged and falsified among men if civilized society, whether through indifference or through cowardice, were to allow itself to suffer a perjury and a crime so obvious to go scathless?

We have only to think of such consequences to perceive what importance attaches, in so far as Belgium's situation in the war is concerned, to the simple things of morality and law. The Belgian Government has grasped this fact and has never ceased to keep these elementary considerations clearly in the light, and this with a candour and resolution which all the sophisms and trickeries of "Kultur" have been unable to defeat.

This appeal to Law it was peculiarly the task of that statesman who presides over King Albert's Ministry of Justice to make, to guide and to endow with the utmost possible clearness and force. To no less degree, thanks to the authority which his previous explorations of the domain of moral and political thought had given to him, was M. Carton de Wiart qualified to discover in the history of his country the deeply rooted causes of that resistance which she is to-day making, and to formulate those reasons which make it necessary for Europe, at some future date, to insist, as the essential condition of her own peace and stability, upon the restoration of Belgium to her former strength and independence.

The writings and speeches which we have brought together in this volume possess, in this connection, great historical value. Not, indeed, the least interest-

ing among those many matters which will occupy the industry and thought of the historians of the Great War will be the energy, informed alike by wisdom and dignity, with which, in the face of the heaviest sacrifices, both public and private, King Albert and his assistants have succeeded in preserving the national sovereignty of Belgium, in directing the efforts of the Army, making good its losses, and providing for all its needs, and in such a way that every day it has become more formidable, and this under the unceasing fire of the enemy. Nor have they failed to guide vigilantly the diplomatic and colonial policy of the country, while preserving at the same time, among the seven and a half millions of Belgians — some condemned to temporary enslavement by the invader, others scattered throughout the world—a spirit of unity, endurance and faith which has yielded neither to the length nor the harshness of the test, neither to the craft nor the brutality of Germany. These manœuvres they have known how to defeat; they have successfully confronted the campaign of lies and slanders which everywhere the agents of Kultur have carried on; they have provided at once for the nourishment of the population both in the occupied territory and in the war zone, and have not forgotten the presence, in foreign countries, of hundreds of thousands of refugees, many of whom have been stripped of all that they possessed. Nor have they failed to study the question of the restoration of the country,

to-day despoiled and covered with ruins, to which all these refugees will be anxious instantly to return, and to prepare the means of that restoration. What problems—legal, administrative, financial and economic—are here awaiting solution, whose very existence the ordinary man does not so much as suspect!

In the volume which we publish to-day a great number of these problems are considered. It will help to show how thoroughly Belgium, who earned the utmost esteem of the nations by her sacrifice of everything, when the German ultimatum was delivered, to her passion for her honour and her pledged word, has shown herself worthy to retain that esteem in the future by the moderation and courage with which she has endured the most terrible and extraordinary storm which has ever, without question, burst upon and overturned the existence of a modern people.

THE PUBLISHERS
OF THE FRENCH EDITION.

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I

THE AGGRESSION

THE WAY OF HONOUR

On the 20th of December 1914, the Belgian Flag Day, the City of Paris formally received the Belgian Government at the Hôtel de Ville.

There were present:

MM. René Viviani, President of the Council;

Aristide Briand, Minister of Justice and Vice President of the Council;

Delcassé, Minister for Foreign Affairs;

Stephen Pichon, formerly Minister for Foreign Affairs and President of the Franco-Belgian Committee;

Baron Guillaume, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Belgium;

Baron Beyens, formerly Minister Plenipotentiary of Belgium at Berlin;

General Galopin, representing the Military Governor of Paris;

Hennion, formerly Prefect of Police, Commissary General for the French Government to the Belgian Government;

Me Henri-Robert, President of the Order of Advocates;

The Senators and Deputies for the Department of the Seine, the Deputies for Havre, several Senators, Deputies and Communal Councillors of Belgium.

Addresses of welcome were made by M. Adrien Mithouard, President of the Municipal Council of Paris, M. Delaney, Prefect of the Department of the Seine, M. E. Laurent, Prefect of Police, and M. Pierre Cherest, President of the General Council of the Department of the Seine. M. Carton de Wiart replied as follows :

In the name of the Belgian Government, in the name of all my fellow-countrymen and above all those who, over yonder, in our ruined and bleeding country, are striving against the power of the aggressor, I thank you, gentlemen, both Presidents and Prefects, for your words of good cheer. I thank you all for the reception which you have given to those words.

Truly, in those words and their reception we recognize a part of a boundless and delicate hospitality extended to us daily, and I ask your permission to refer only to one thing—the affirmation of the never-failing friendship which unites Belgium to France.

But a little while ago, in the days of peace, we often spoke of that friendship.

But to-day, how far sweeter is that friendship! How we regard it to-day! How freely it proclaims itself! How it lives! This it is which in the heart of Paris, and at the same moment in every commune of France, unites our flags and our love for our countries. This it is which in our plains by the Yser, among the bursting shell and shrapnel, fills

with irresistible energy those who bear arms in one cause, whose hearts beat to the impulse of one hope.

An historian of ancient times has defined friendship very acutely : " To wish for the same things together, to hate together and to repudiate the same things—this," he says, " is true friendship."

And that which we wish, as do you—the single ambition to which our international policy, like your own, has the desire and the right to pretend, is—to be honest men.

Yes, honest men, bondsmen of their word and signature, faithful to that ideal which France has always worshipped and which we understand even as does she, for which we fight without rest and will suffer without a murmur ; that ideal which is known by one word, not to be translated into German—Honour !

From the year 1831 Belgium maintained her prosperous existence under a special statute which was indeed the very condition of her independence. By the most solemn treaties the Powers had undertaken, with us and with one another, to respect our neutrality—nay more, to guarantee it.

Yet suddenly, on Sunday the 2nd of August, at seven o'clock in the evening, one of these Powers addressed Belgium in the following terms :

" Let my armies pass, that I may the more quickly attack my rival and take him by surprise. Agree, and you will have nothing to regret. Refuse, and I will treat you as my foe ! "

Why should I not say it? In this crucial moment we were confronted with a tragic vision—this fair land, whose smiling prosperity was our pride, invaded in spite of a useless resistance and ravaged by hordes without number.

But to yield passage to one of the co-signatories of our treaties, let him be who he might, not to do everything—yes, everything—to oppose him, this would have been to betray our other guarantors. It would have been to break our promise. No Belgian dreamed of it.

And to-day, after so many atrocities endured, after all the pillage and the burnings, after the massacre of so many innocent folk, the loss of so much wealth, the ruin of so much that is fair—for they have martyrized the living and the dead, not only men but the very stones—in spite of our devastated towns, our ravaged fields, our mourning people, wandering through the remnants of their homes or turned adrift upon the roads—who, after all, among these victims would exchange his misery for the spoils of that brigandage?

An English artist, Bernard Partridge, has shown us, in a drawing already famous, the Emperor of Germany standing beside our King Albert.

The Kaiser, with a sinister smile, points to the corpses and ruins that lie heaped over the soil of Belgium, and whispers in his ear: "So, you see, you've lost everything!"

And our young King, to whom the honour of all

his people has been entrusted, answers simply, as he draws himself up proudly and rests his weight upon his sword as it were upon his honour: "Not my soul!"

In our place, you would have spoken and acted as we did.

At one in our conception of honour, we understand and admire one another—do we not?—in the measure of all that our consciences scorn and condemn.

We have watched in the Universities of Germany, like some monstrous and poisonous flower, a new doctrine come to life and flourish — *Weltpolitik*. So is named that hypertrophy of Prussian nationalism which denies all that hinders it and swallows up all that it desires.

For its promises, agreements, contracts—that is to say, all that makes society, for nations as for individuals, possible—become, from the moment when they begin to be inconvenient, nothing but scraps of paper.

At the sweet will of its crazy pride, it crushes bodies and souls, it perverts, corrupts, terrorizes, starves, traduces.

In its pedantry it has decided that small States are nothing but miserable and contemptible institutions and that they are fated inevitably to be absorbed by the great.

Only a few days ago Nansen, in the presence of the King of Norway, protested eloquently against

this rapacious doctrine and showed what Holland, Switzerland, Denmark and yet other States had, with us, to fear from it.

It is this very theory which the policy of the French Republic denies when it admits for every nationality, which has earned the right to live by the part which it has played in the civilization of the world, an indefeasible right to live according to its own desires.

Was it not one of the fathers of the Republic, was it not Thiers, who, already advancing this theory, added that in the Society of Nations the small States always represent the cause of right, since they are always on the side of the weak?

And so, every nation which desires to live and to remain herself knows henceforward where her trust is to be placed; and if, on the one hand, in Belgium, it is force which makes right, on the other hand, here it is right and union in the right which make force.

Now, note with how clear and pure an atmosphere this double sentiment—the worship of honour and respect for one's fellow-man—envelops the action of the Allies; the air which one breathes here is, as it were, saturated with honour. Here words find again their true meaning and are freed from Teutonic sophism. Wait awhile, and you shall see the neutral countries learn here to understand that duty which to-day confronts them, that duty of which one of the masters of International Law, M. Louis Renault, reminded them the other day, when he told them

that in the face of a definite violation of law, shameless and acknowledged, like this of Belgium's neutrality, it will not do for the other Governments —to-day witnesses, to-morrow, perhaps, victims—to shut themselves up behind an official indifference and to tolerate, if only by their silence, the flouting of regulations which they themselves have adopted.

For us this atmosphere of candour is charged and enlivened also by the brilliance of the historic virtues of France ; and these have never shone more gloriously. And is it not, I ask you, this very brilliance which to-day upholds and cheers our own dear Belgian flag and, across the scarlet of our blood and the blackness of our ruins, casts so bright a gleam of gold ?

Ah ! dear flag, the symbol of the ancient unity of our provinces, both Flemish and Walloon, how proud of it we are, and how we thank you for the salute with which you have honoured it !

In 1789 it was first unfurled, after the Brabançon Revolution, when we raised it against the oppression of Austria. In 1830 it reappeared in the triumph of our independence. In August 1914, at the frontier, it confronted perjury and aggression, and its is the honour of having shattered the first onslaught of the Barbarian.

To-day, you embrace it in the name of France and of Paris.

To-morrow, our belfries and our clock-towers— in Bruges and Antwerp and Malines and Brussels and

Louvain and Liége — widowed to-day awhile and mourning their lost flags, will celebrate its return. With what transports of delight will they see it come, safeguarded by the glorious flags of England and France. And the sight shall heal these old towers of their wounds.

In that same hour we shall acclaim, not far away, an Alsace-Lorraine that has been won back to France; on the banks of the Vistula, thanks to the noble decision of the Tzar, a restored Poland; and throughout a healthier Europe, whence a great breeze of moral sanity shall have swept away for ever all the miasmas of *Weltpolitik*, every small State shall flourish untroubled within the frontiers which its legitimate aspirations shall assign.

And on that day—I say it without hesitation—there will not be found throughout the world a single honest heart that will not beat more strongly for the unity of immortal France and will not rejoice with her in the vindication of the Right and the triumph of Civilization.

THE BARBARIAN IN BELGIUM[1]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

This book, wherein you have so truthfully portrayed the crimes of which Germany has been guilty

[1] Introduction to *Les Barbares en Belgique*, by Pierre Nothomb (Paris, Perrin & Co.).

upon our soil, is one long shudder. In writing it you have performed a task at once of piety and of vengeance, of a son's love for Belgium, of righteous wrath against her oppressor.

It is not enough that an official Commission of Enquiry, whose labours, as cautious as they are authoritative, have now for six months been proceeding, should record by its evidence and its reports the unanswerable proofs of Germany's scorn both for her most sacred promises and for the regulations of war, for international probity and for the common rights of Humanity—in a word, for everything upon and out of which Civilization is founded and built.

Of the proofs thus obtained, a synthesis was required. Out of all these crimes the principle from which they sprang had to be extracted. Above all, for the glory of the victims and the shame of the butchers, it was necessary that these crimes should be denounced, not merely before the Chancelleries of the world, but in the hearing of the great mass of mankind, and that they should be stigmatized as they deserved. This it is which you have proposed to yourself to do. This it is which you have done. I only hope that other writers, as sincere and courageous as yourself, will be fired by this example, so that there may no longer, in any country of the world, be one man worthy of the name who, through his ignorance, shall remain indifferent to a cause wherein the solidarity of the entire human race is concerned. Yes, it is necessary that our dear land, who has been

crucified for her devotion to duty, should proclaim the truth aloud, not so much to solicit compassion as to vindicate the Right.

* * *

The Right! At the mere sound of this word it is to me as if amongst us there arose the voice of bitter protest and here and there of sarcasm.

"The Right!" say those simple men whose homes have been destroyed, whose families have vanished into the tempest, and who to-day witness the insolent occupation of our towns and villages. "The Right! What a snare! What a mockery!"

"What! A Great Power who, in agreement with the others, had first of all insisted that Belgium should remain perpetually neutral, now suddenly demanded that we should violate that neutrality for her benefit and against the interests of her co-signatories. She had assumed the duty of guaranteeing us. And then, shamelessly, she sprang at our throat. Can History point to a perjury more flagrant? Not without cynicism did the German Empire, through its Chancellor in the Reichstag, admit it on the 4th of August 1914. And in the face of such an infamy, what was done, what was said by the forty-two States who solemnly subscribed their names to Article I of one of their Hague Conventions: 'The territory of neutral Powers is inviolable'?

"It is not," add those simple men, "it is not

merely that Justice has been outraged openly and with impunity. An agreement had also, at The Hague, been entered into by these States under the title 'Laws and Customs of Warfare upon Land,' and this set forth certain imperative rules as the strict minimum of what respect for human life and property imposes upon belligerents. Well, of all these regulations there is not one—no, not one—whose breach by Germany has not been established beyond question. Scarcely had their armies forced our frontier than they delivered themselves over to pillage, massacre and rape. Their proclamations, signed by their military and civilian chiefs, systematized the infliction of atrocious collective punishments. By thousands, non-combatants—and among these priests, old men, women and children—were shot and tortured. By thousands others were deported into Prussia. Without any strategic reason, open towns were bombarded. World-famous churches, charitable and scientific institutions, miracles of art, were blotted out. Theft was organized wholesale, like a business. It was no longer war, no more than an assassination is a duel. It was a frightful heaping up of crimes against the rights of humanity and of bloody atrocities. And in face of these crimes, what was said, what was done, by all those States, the result of whose painstaking labours was thus made a mockery? Where is the official voice that was raised in protest? International Law, Rules of War, National Rights —what then is the good of these fine words, unless

it be to dupe the weak and to allow the strong to invoke them whensoever they see their own advantage in so doing ? "

Such things are in the thoughts and on the lips of many of these victims who have suffered so much. They do not complain. They hold back their tears. But at least, in their bitter suffering, they ask that no longer before their eyes, for their consolation, there shall be spread all this deceitful wealth of humanitarian phrases and international conventions, empty pretences all or sham screens, behind which they perceive the ineradicable carelessness, selfishness and cowardice of men and nations alike.

* * *

But no ! We must not accept, we may not tolerate such talk. Upon the day when these blasphemies get the better of our faith in the immanent Justice of God, upon that day, but on that day only, we shall be conquered. Right up to the end—that is to say until our definite victory has been won—our legitimate defence must rest, and shall always rest, at once upon our arms and upon Justice.

International Law, doubtless, is, against the abuses of a brutal force, a means of defence whose immediate value we would do well not to exaggerate. But it would be still less wise for us, on our part, to underestimate its importance. Let others display an unenviable courage in ranking among " scraps of paper " the solemn treaties which nations make the

one with the other. We will never cease to proclaim the principles of the Eternal Morality. It is upon the battlefield of the human conscience, and not only through the mouths of cannon and at the bayonet's point, that the fate of nations is decided. Frightful though the spectacle be which the world to-day affords, Humanity has not ceased to be human. The night has swallowed us up. But, however deep the gloom may be which surrounds us, " somewhere it is always morning," as Longfellow says. And does not the glow of dawn already brighten our horizon ? The more widely it is known, the more closely will our cause attract to itself the sympathy of all honest hearts. In his Pastoral Letter, already historical, has not Cardinal Mercier been able to announce that our little Belgium has won the highest place in the admiration of the people of the earth ?

Is it necessary to look for proof of this among our Allies, whose Governments have so loyally stood by the promises they made to us in 1839, whose armies are to-day fighting, side by side with our own soldiers, on that soil of Belgium which one day we are to free with their help, and whose inhabitants are receiving our refugees with so warm and kindly a greeting ?

Let us rather listen to those indignant and authoritative voices which, in the neutral countries, are rising in our defence. Since the month of September 1914, in the United States, we have known that the

deep-seated righteousness of the great American people has thrilled in unison with our Belgian hearts. But a few weeks ago, the statesman who so brilliantly guided the destinies of America and at whose suggestion the Conference of 1907 met — Theodore Roosevelt—reminded the world of the abuses which that Conference forbade, and added: "All these offences have been committed by Germany, and her treatment of Belgium is the gravest of international crimes." And, replying to those who see in these Conventions nothing but empty phrases, he says: "Had I for one moment imagined that to sign these Conventions of The Hague meant nothing more than the expression of a pious hope at which each Power was free to scoff with impunity, should its interests so demand, I should assuredly never have allowed us to take any part in so mischievous a farce." Another great citizen of the Union, Dr. Charles W. Eliot, Emeritus Professor of Harvard University, has, in his turn, done me the honour to express to me "the profound sympathy of cultured Americans for suffering Belgium and their horror at the methods by which the Germans to-day carry on war."

In Switzerland, at the opening of the session of the Federal Chambers last December, the *doyen* of the National Council, M. Henri Fazy, did not hesitate to pronounce the strong protest of a small, but, like ours, a loyal and proud people, against this unquestionable violation of Right, this contempt of the claims of honour and of Humanity.

Among our neighbours and friends in Holland, where by hundreds of thousands Belgians in flight from their ruined homes are meeting to-day with a frank and generous hospitality, the men of science are in revolt against the Manifesto of their colleagues in the German Universities. "Among them," cries Kernkamp, an Amsterdam Professor, "there is not to be found a single one capable of expressing a sentiment, ever so remotely chivalrous, for the unfortunate Belgians and their Government who have so boldly resisted the demands of Germany. The Belgians are the only people who can justly speak of a war which has been forced upon them. They might have preserved their lives and property in safety, had they been sufficiently base to raise no opposition to the passage of Germany. They were not guilty of that baseness. This is the sole reproach which the Germans can level at them."

Personally, I confess that, when I read the Manifesto of the German professors, I imagined at first that it was some parody, or one of those rather heavily ironical "accusations," the lure of which the Anglo-Saxon humorist does not always know how to resist, and wherein Mark Twain and Chesterton have excelled. In this parody I found cause for regret in the too violent exaggeration with which its authors had represented the cumbersome audacity of German pedantry.

Let us, if you will, recall this catalogue of monstrosities. "It is not true that we have criminally

violated the neutrality of Belgium." "It is not true that our soldiers have attacked either the life or the property of a single Belgian citizen, save where they have been forced so to do by the hard necessity of legitimate defence." "It is not true that our troops have savagely destroyed Louvain." "It is not true that we make war in defiance of International Law." No. The parody went, in truth, beyond the limits which are permitted to this species of puzzle. And I felt a sort of shame for those who had invented this absurdity, when I found that they had adorned the foot of this litany of preposterous denials with the names of several scientists with whom I had the honour to be acquainted, and for whom I cherished the most sincere respect, such as Herren Lamprecht, Wundt or von Liszt.

Since then I have been assured upon unimpeachable authority that the document was genuine, and that the humorists of England or America had in no way contributed to its production. I could only rejoice for the reputation of those gentlemen: but for that of the German Professors I can only weep.

But if it is so, how are we to explain this blundering performance?

Were these signatures collected by one or another of those methods which German culture has employed amongst us towards peasants who have shown themselves not too eager to serve as guides to the Death's Head Hussars, or towards bankers

who did not open their strong rooms with sufficient alacrity? Or perhaps the official documents upon which these learned gentlemen have founded their denials may have been lacking in one or other of those strict conditions which the most modern historical criticism demands? We need not hesitate to give these intellectuals the benefit of one or other of these charitable suppositions, since we are able to appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober. Their intoxication at an end, they must have made the acquaintance of the official reports and read books like this; and now, if they persist in their audacious denial of those infamies to which our ruins, where the flames have hardly ceased to blaze, our graves, whereon the earth lies fresh, bear witness, if they are prepared to find excuses for so many infamies and cover them with the mantle of their *Weltpolitik?* by what names, I ask, are we to brand them?

How may they still without blushing encounter the eye of an honourable man?

How may each one of them remain face to face with a conscience that is burdened by so heavy a shame?

* * *

The day when the tempest broke upon us surprised you, my dear friend, like so many others, in the midst of your own home life and the joys of your own peaceful work. Those who have read your beautiful poems, so pure in their inspiration and their form, could easily picture for themselves the

ivory tower wherein your saintly soul had made her refuge. Immediately, leaving behind you your young family, abandoning your growing fame, you took up your weapons, and in the ranks of the Brussels Guard you went out valiantly to war. Beneath the spectacle of the land, the glow of fires, the vision of ruin and slaughter, your poet's soul became filled with all the sorrows of our human brotherhood, and your heart was oppressed by its desire for justice. Then you remembered that the pen is also a weapon. And with the pen of eloquence and sincerity, inspired by none but the most certain evidence, you have expressed for us the deep misery of this Belgian people which stands to-day in the eyes of the world as the living personification of all that is noblest and, let them say what they will, strongest—the Right. It is to serve your country still, thus to proclaim her sorrows and her hopes. It is to make yourself yet worthier of the name you bear, a name that is so closely associated with the history of our independence.

* * *

In one of those confidences wherein his whole philosophy betrays itself, Bismarck does not fear to raise the destruction of property and the massacre of civilians to the dignity of rules of war, in order, as he says, "to bring the ruined and decimated population to a frame of mind which shall cause them to beg for peace and submit quietly to the conditions of the conqueror." The theory is detestable. Nay,

more, it is false. In so far as we alone are concerned, our history is enough to prove that the Belgians have never allowed themselves to be crushed by such an ordeal and have never yielded to its accomplishment.

You know, doubtless, in the old museum at Namur, which stands so charmingly at the Grognon Gate, where the Sambre and the Meuse come together, that mysterious memorial monument which has come down to us from our eager and tumultuous fifteenth century. It represents, cut in granite, a body without a head: a knight, clad in armour, his hands crossed upon his breast in the manner of a priest. No name, no coat of arms, no date. Only, on the stone, one reads this legend in Gothic letters: "The hour will come that shall pay for everything."

This hour will come for us too; we know it; we desire it. All our thoughts and energies centre to-day around our King upon the battlefields of Flanders. Sad and shaken though we be, we remain filled with hope in the Eternal Justice, with confidence that the necessary reparation will be made. It may be long. No matter! We are victims, but victims whom an honourable pride supports. The hour will come that shall pay for everything. And then, what joy will be ours! Aided by our young generations, whom duty, heroically assumed, shall have matured, whom the flame of battles shall have tested, we shall rebuild—shall we not?—a new life for ourselves, a new Belgium, fairer still than the old one.

HAVRE, *February* 1, 1915.

METHODS OF WAR AND PROPAGANDA

On the 7th of August 1914, upon the reports of the excesses which the German troops had been committing from the moment of their entry into Belgium, the Belgian Government appointed an official Commission which was entrusted with the task of collecting, analysing and examining, in the most impartial and careful way, all the facts brought under its notice which might appear to be violations of the rules of International Law and of the rules and customs of war.

This Commission was composed of experienced and cautious men—their very reputation constitutes a most valuable guarantee—and sat first in Antwerp, then in Havre and London, where a number of delegates, under the chairmanship of Sir Mackenzie Chalmers, undertook the work of collecting and examining the evidence of numerous witnesses who had taken refuge in England.

At Brussels the Commission was presided over by M. van Iseghem, President of the Cour de Cassation ; at Antwerp and Havre by M. Cooreman, Minister of State and formerly President of the Chamber of Deputies.

This conscientious investigation was summed up in twenty-two reports which have been published in various languages.[1] No refutation of any

[1] Berger-Levrault, Publishers, Nancy.

definite nature or supported by any proof has up to the present appeared by which the conclusions therein stated might be weakened. On the contrary, the Governments of France and Great Britain having, in pursuance of the example set them by the Belgian Government, themselves organized official Commissions of Enquiry, under the presidency, in the first case, of M. Payelle, President of the Cour des Comptes of France, and in the other of Lord Bryce, formerly Ambassador of Great Britain at Washington, obtained confirmation and further definition of many revelations which the Belgian enquiry had collected.

These official documents have, again, been amplified by private publications which have appeared in various countries.

It is true that not all these stories which the war has set afloat are to be given an equal measure of belief. Any one who has any experience of the weakness of human evidence must begin by placing himself on guard against the confusion, the forgetfulness, the mistakes and the falsehoods which may impair or blot out the recollection of a witness. Depositions are worth nothing more than the value of their maker's honesty and the accuracy of his memory, the exactness of his observation, and the power which is his of silencing, with the single object of arriving at the truth, the voice of his passions, which itself is capable of inspiring him with resentment, enthusiasm, self-interest, or the mere desire to put himself forward.

But to consider among these publications only those of which the authors, by earlier work of theirs, or by previous proof of their prudence and honesty, can give serious evidence of sincerity, it is easy to-day to arrive at a definite opinion with regard to the conduct in Belgium of the German authorities and the German soldiers.

The value of so much evidence, accompanied by the dates, names and other simply verified particulars, is, again, strangely increased by the refusal of the German authorities to submit them to any authorized Court of Enquiry or Arbitration.

Already the Belgian Commission has announced that it is ready to submit the result of its labours to an International Commission of Enquiry composed of delegates from the non-belligerent countries.

"It is proper to observe," says its twelfth Report, in conclusion, "that the facts upon which our conclusions are based have been sworn to by honourable witnesses, who have seen with their own eyes and have signed their depositions. As many of them are living in territory still occupied by the invader, it is to be understood that we must not prematurely publish their names. But we do not fear, nay, with all our force we demand, the formation of an International Commission which will undertake our enquiry afresh and upon a broader basis, and will offer to those who shall give evidence before it guarantees of personal security."

The Belgian bishops, too, who have, with a courage

truly apostolic, on many occasions denounced to the German authorities, both civil and military, the abominations which have desolated and are still desolating their dioceses, have offered to make these same accusations, should they be contested, before an Arbitration Tribunal. Cardinal Mercier, in his letters of the 24th of January 1915 and the 10th of February 1915, and Monseigneur Heylen, Bishop of Namur, in his letter of the 12th of April 1915, have begged that a tribunal be appointed composed of arbitrators, both German and Belgian, in equal numbers, and should have for its president some person nominated by a neutral State. Following out this idea, the admirable manifesto which, on the 24th of November 1915, was addressed by all the bishops of Belgium to the bishops of Germany, offered to submit the exactitude of the Belgian assertions and protests to a court of ecclesiastics.

An attempt of the same kind was made, during the month of January 1915, in the name of Freemasonry, by M. Charles Magnette, Senator for Liége and Grand Master of the Belgian Lodges.

After stating to the Freemasons of Germany that "it would be of the highest utility to examine into the circumstances in which the horrors which all civilized men deplore were perpetrated," M. Charles Magnette added:

"And now I would ask you to agree with me to appoint a Commission of Enquiry which shall

travel through the districts where the war has passed, and where it is now being carried on, and which shall prepare a report of its findings after possessing itself of all the information which may be of service. This Commission would be composed of delegates from the Grand Lodges of the neutral countries; for instance, a Dutch brother, a Swiss, and an Italian, and naturally it would contain a German Mason and a Belgian."

If these proposals have met with no response, it is because the German authorities know very well that they could expect, from any tribunal worthy of the name, nothing but the confirmation of the formidable indictment which has been raised against them by the accusing voices of so many victims and witnesses of their crimes. No new examination of those crimes, no public arguments of which they could be the subject, could fail to awake the attention and arouse the indignation of the neutral countries. The sole desire, the sole hope of Germany, is that forgetfulness may obscure her enormities, and that presently the dust of time, heaped up through all the ruin and convulsion by which humanity is overtaken to-day, shall succeed in covering with a species of prescription or amnesty all the mud, ashes and blood of which she has been the author.

But this calculation of hers will be baffled. The Universal Conscience and History will not lend themselves to its furtherance. No matter how great may be the selfishness and carelessness of

nations and men, there exists, deep down in each of us, a desire for justice which cannot be extirpated. Every attempt to stifle it only increases its force and its driving power. And never will this desire for justice suffer Force and Cynicism to usurp the name of Right. Never shall Lady Macbeth wash away the spot of blood which denounces her crime to the world.

* * *

"The originality of the German atrocities in this war," says M. Jean Cruppi, formerly Minister of Justice for France, "is not to be found in their motive, nor in the barbarity of their performance, but rather in the systematic efforts which their authors have made to unite their crimes with a scientific conception of the state of war."

This is a very just observation. We find ourselves in the presence of a methodical barbarism which takes itself for a form of civilization and pushes its excursions into paradox to limits which the mind of man has never hitherto imagined.

The theory of the German General Staff may be reduced to this single principle: Everything is permissible which can assure our military triumph. We are only concerned with the rights of others in so far as those may lead to some counter-stroke dangerous to Germany's interests.

Immediately after the Hague Conferences, at which the representatives of the Powers had with great difficulty come to some agreement regarding

the introduction of certain regulations among the usages of war, the German General Staff, fearing no doubt lest some of its simple soldiers should be inclined to take seriously these Conventions to which Germany had put her name, published a *Manual of the Rules of Continental War* (*Kriegsbrauch im Landkriege*) which became part of the portable library of every German officer. The theory of this Manual is summed up in the following formula :

" Humanitarian claims, such as the sparing of men and property, can only come into play in so far as the nature and object of the war allow."

For those whom humanitarian scruples and the simple respect of the given word might check, the Manual adds :

" Nineteenth century thought was essentially swayed by humanitarian considerations which often degenerated into sentimentality. There have been not a few attempts to remodel the development of the customs of war in a sense absolutely at variance with the nature of war and its objects. In the future there will certainly be many more such endeavours, especially as these efforts have already found moral recognition in the Convention of Geneva and the Conferences of Brussels and of The Hague.

" But take care," adds the Manual. " The officer is himself the child of his times ; he is carried along by the currents of thought which agitate his country, and this so much the more because he is an educated person. There is then danger that he may arrive

at quite false conceptions with regard to the true object of war. Only by a thorough study of military history will he be secured from exaggerated ideas of humanity, and will understand that war necessarily entails certain cruelties and, still more, that the only genuine humanity is often to be found in the ruthless practice of these severities."

It is in this conception, expounded and developed with a pedantry and cynicism the measure of which has been given to us by the writings of Treitschke, Bernhardi and Harden, that we must seek for the explanation of so many of the crimes that have been perpetrated by Germany in the course of the present war, from the violation of Belgian neutrality—and this remains the most flagrant and atrocious of all—down to the massacre of civilians, that simple application of the principle of collective punishment.

"This principle"—so writes coldly Dr. Walter Bloem in the *Cologne Gazette* of the 10th of February 1915—"finds its justification in the theory of terrorization (*Abschreckung*). The innocent suffer along with the guilty and, if the latter cannot be found, in their place. This punishment is not inflicted because a crime has been committed, but in order that crimes may not be committed. Every burning of a village, every execution of hostages, every suppression of a part of the population of a commune whose people have taken up arms against the troops which appear among them—all these things are far less in the nature of acts of vengeance than they are

warnings addressed to the territory which has not yet been occupied.

"And this is not to be questioned. It is truly as warnings that the burnings of Battice, Herve, Louvain, Dinant served. The incendiarism and bloodshed of the beginning of the campaign saved the great towns of Belgium from the temptation to attack the weak garrisons with which alone we were able to occupy them. Is there a man alive who imagines that the Belgian capital would have tolerated our presence—and to-day we move about in Brussels as in our own country—had not that capital trembled, did it not tremble still, in its fear of our vengeance?

"War is not a society pastime. It is fire of hell. He who touches it with his finger burns his hand and soul and loses his life. It is of such a fate that the poor Belgian people, blinded and led astray, has become the victim."

And applying these theories to the Eastern theatre of war, Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, whom the Germans regard as the first of their generals, replies to an interviewer of the *Neue Freie Presse*:

"The land suffers. Lodz is famished. It is regrettable, but it is right. War is not made sentimentally. The more pitilessly it is carried on the more it is humane, at bottom, for it the more quickly comes to an end. Those methods of war which bring peace most rapidly are and remain the most humane methods."

There, in all its nakedness, is the whole of German mentality. It is this which is at stake in the monstrous conflict which to-day is tearing the world to pieces. The true question to be decided by this immense war is not so much whether the principle of nationality shall triumph over that of imperialism, nor whether autocracy shall carry the day against popular liberty. We are concerned to decide which philosophy is henceforth to prevail in the education of nations and individuals: whether it is to be the old morality of Christendom, to the development of which twenty centuries of civilization have contributed and which teaches at once respect for the person and property of others and belief in the given word, or else the "Kultur" of Prussia, for which there exists no check upon selfishness nor any appeal to justice against force.

* * *

Intoxicated though she may be by the poison of these theories, Germany is nevertheless too well informed with regard to international opinion, by the swarms of agents which she maintains in every country of the world, not to understand that the doctrines of her General Staff are not particularly acceptable abroad, and that the monstrous obstinacy which she favours has proved for the most part indigestible for the weaker psychologies of Europe and America, still but little accustomed to a diet of Kultur. In the same way that her commerce prides

itself on accommodating its most insignificant products to the taste of the foreign consumer, her propaganda has not hesitated to adapt itself to the mentalities which it proposes to educate. The reports of the massacres and incendiarism committed by the German troops were of a nature to arouse the indignation and sympathy of the New World. What could be more simple, then, than a solemn manifesto, signed by ninety-three German scientists, and projected across the ocean, to deny with the utmost effrontery both massacres and burnings? Let us recall its terms.

"It is not true that we have criminally violated the neutrality of Belgium.

"It is not true that our soldiers have attacked the life and property of a single Belgian citizen, save where they have been compelled to do so by the harsh necessities of legitimate defence.

"It is not true that our troops have brutally destroyed Louvain.

"It is not true that we have made war regardless of International Law. Our soldiers have committed neither acts of indiscipline nor acts of cruelty."

But not for long could such denials avail against the evidence of innumerable barbarities. No matter. By an audacious perversion of the facts, the victims can be made to bear the responsibility for acts of repression which their own conduct has made necessary!

When, on the 11th of September 1914, the Belgian

Mission appointed by His Majesty the King of the Belgians to visit the President of the United States, and over which I had the honour to preside, reached New York, it was with no small astonishment that it learned that, two days earlier, the German Emperor, anxious to anticipate the effect of the documents and protests which the Mission was to bring to the notice of the great American Republic, had cabled to Mr. Wilson a personal message in which, after accusing the French Army of having employed bullets "the use of which is forbidden by the accepted principles of International Law," he added: "I make therefore a solemn protest against such a way of making war, which has become, thanks to the methods of our adversaries, one of the most barbarous in history. Not only have they themselves employed this cruel device, but the Belgian Government has openly encouraged the civil population to take part in this war, for which it has long and carefully prepared. The cruelties practised in the course of this guerrilla warfare by women and even by priests against our wounded soldiers, our doctors and our nurses (doctors have been killed and hospitals have been shelled) have been such that my generals have at last been compelled to adopt the most rigorous means in order to punish the offenders and to prevent a savage population from continuing these criminal and detestable acts. Several villages and even the town of Louvain have had to be destroyed (except the beautiful Hôtel de Ville) in the interests of our own

safety and the protection of my troops. My heart bleeds when I recognize that such measures have been rendered inevitable, and when I think of the countless innocent people who have lost their homes and their goods by reason of the misdeeds of such criminals.—WILHELM, I.R."

My colleagues and I had come directly from Belgium. We had seen with our own eyes, in the hospitals and along the side of the highways, peasants who had been hideously wounded or mutilated by the German soldiers. At Antwerp we had seen Zeppelins dropping formidable bombs upon the town, during the night of the 25th of August and without the slightest warning, and killing women in their sleep. We had seen those unforgettable streams of fugitives, men, women, old people, children, who had hardly succeeded in carrying away a few poor rags of clothing, and who had been driven from the villages by the terror of the Prussian burnings and murders. We knew the character of our people, both Walloons and Flemings, whom nothing had prepared for the war and assuredly no one had encouraged to take part in it, and in particular the decent inhabitants of the country round Liége, " a people at once honest, refined and endowed with a sense of proportion," as M. Gustave Somville has so truly said of them. We had in our possession the official copies of declarations already collected and of reports already issued by the official Commission of Enquiry. And so it can be understood how

great an effort it required on our part to comprehend the impudence of the Imperial message, which to the flagrant injustice of the aggression against Belgium (an injustice admitted by Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg during the session of the Reichstag of the 4th of August) and to the atrocities of the German troops, proof of which we possessed, added a new refinement which we assuredly could never have anticipated—the criminal's attempt at justification, who, in order to excuse himself, blackens the character of his own victim.

The Imperial telegram alleged the necessity of repressing "guerrilla warfare." It accused the Belgian Government of having openly incited the civil population to take part in this war, for which it had long prepared. It accused women and priests of cruelty to wounded soldiers.

Not only has it been impossible to prove one of these grave and formal accusations, but the very contrary has been established upon the clearest evidence.

Far from inciting the civil population to join in the war, the Government had, from the first day of hostilities, prepared it to adopt the quiet attitude which the situation demanded.

M. Berryer, the Minister of the Interior, had, on the 4th of August, caused detailed instructions to be sent to the 2,700 communes of the kingdom. Posters, placarded throughout the country, reminded the people that "the laws of war forbade the civil population to take part in hostilities." The mayors

had recommended all to bring their weapons to the town halls. The religious authorities had given the same advice as had the civil.

When did the Germans encounter these pretended *francs-tireurs* of theirs? Where have they seen them at work? What definite acts have they committed? What are their names? What their descriptions? The German Government has published certain statements of its officers and soldiers in an elaborate White Book, the beauty of whose printing does not succeed in hiding its intrinsic worthlessness. These statements are less in the nature of evidence than of complaisant and vague explanations, furnished by the authors themselves, of the massacres of Aerschot, Louvain, and Dinant, embroideries upon the common theme, "Firing occurred." What remains of this book, after the reply of the Belgian Commission, after the letters of the bishops, and after the third Belgian Grey Book? And what force can it claim after the denials which the *Cologne Gazette*, *Vorwaerts* and the *Pax* bureau themselves have published of the odious accusation of cruelty to the German wounded which is so solemnly made in the Imperial dispatch?

All these wretched excuses fall to the ground one after the other, to leave bare to the eye, in their crudity and essential hideousness, the methods to which the German Army had recourse in Belgium, in conformity with the orders of its leaders and the policy of its General Staff.

So many crimes, so many thousands of innocent people put to death or deported into servitude, so much beauty and wealth destroyed or plundered, await the hour of Justice. Violence and trickery may postpone the coming of that hour, but not indefinitely.

Among the countless voices which day after day in the neutral countries continue to express the indignation of honourable men, I confine myself to borrowing for reproduction here the following words, published on the 14th of October 1914 in a great American newspaper, the *Providence Journal*:

"William of Germany and his people have their accounts to make up with God; no lying will save them. They have, of their own choice, in their mad lust of conquest, made of a fair land a veritable shambles. They have seized by the throat a small and peaceable nation and have carved it into quivering morsels; they have crushed its life out beneath an iron heel. The different accounts of the German atrocities may not be all perfectly exact, but many of them are beyond all question true. However much there may be of truth and falsehood in the details, there remains in any case established a certitude of cruelty and savagery so monstrous that it extorts the same cry of 'Shame upon this crime!' from every human being who has preserved within his bosom one spark of charity or of justice.

"The might of Germany, her boasted war-machine, her supremacy in the arts, the sciences and commerce

may no longer be saved by victories in the field of battle. They are from now onwards blotted out, and many a generation must pass in bitter labour before their country shall again stand upon her feet. And this is not the result of her succumbing to superior forces, nor of the check with which she has met in her campaign of rapine and butchery. No! It results solely from the circumstance that, with the pretension to be a great nation worthy to have her 'place in the sun,' Germany has declared before the entire world that a treaty is only a 'scrap of paper' and that she has, with the hands of a maniac, proclaiming herself the elect of God, drenched in blood, by her thousands of murders, a country whose peace and integrity she herself had sworn to defend."

This is the simple speech of conscience against which no cleverness or sophisms may prevail. Vainly, in their insolent triumph of a day, do those who at the moment are in occupation of my beloved country flatter themselves that they will stifle the protests of the soul of humanity.

Crime passes. The Right is eternal.

II

THE ARMY

THE BELGIAN SOLDIER

A speech delivered in the Hall of King Albert's Hospital in London on the 1st *of January* 1915, *at a conference of the principal organizations in England which are concerned with Belgian soldiers.*

Ladies and Gentlemen,—

A great German poet, the author of a play called *The Robbers*—and this title, I think, has lost none of its reality—Schiller, in short, on a certain occasion gave utterance to this profound thought: "The punishment of an evil deed," he wrote, "consists in this, that it inevitably leads to further evil deeds, which are always worse and worse."

And, indeed, the world has recently witnessed the proof of this truth. The evil deed which Germany did when she violated the neutrality of a little country which she had sworn to protect, this first crime has forced her upon our soil, in order to extract her benefit from her act, in order to endeavour to crush quickly a resistance for whose obstinacy she had not allowed, to heap crime on crime, each more infamous than the last. And so has come about that series of crimes of every sort against International Law, those robberies, those burnings, those massacres

without cause, that methodical execution of a nation, tortured through its children, its monuments of art, its beliefs, that whole succession of atrocities and villainies which throughout the world, in proportion as the truth comes to light, excite a growing horror in all honest hearts and devote to shame, for generations to come, the Army and, I do not hesitate to add, the people of Germany.

But as to this observation of Schiller, it is a fancy of mine to reverse it to-day. And I say that this is the fate and the reward of a good action—that it continues to engender other good actions, and these are each better than the last.

The good action of England and France is the loyal and noble enthusiasm with which they both hastened to the rescue of that neutrality which they had guaranteed to us. To this military co-operation they have added a warm welcome into their own homes, extended, in these dark days, to our exiled people and to our national Government itself. And each day this generosity grows for us larger and larger, adds continually to its charm, discovers daily new motives for and new methods of cherishing us—I was going to say of encouraging us, but where is the man amongst us who for so much as a second has dreamed of losing courage?

And now we encounter to-day a new expression of these sentiments, at once so eager and so kindly, in the tumultuous applause which but a moment ago sounded through this great hall, and in the

generous words to which we have listened—words of which I will accept not one for myself, but, rather, all for my country, my Sovereign, and my fellow-countrymen.

But a few days ago Paris, under the pale sun of December but in all the brilliance of her sympathy, saluted and did honour to our three colours, the red, the yellow, and the black, henceforth the sisters of the French and British colours.

To-day, London in her turn has desired to salute and do honour to those who are defending our dear Belgian flag, those who for it are fighting and dying.

* * *

The Belgian soldier! You knew nothing of him, I fancy, or hardly anything, before that tragic month of August. We ourselves did not know him or admire him in that rather old-fashioned uniform which our national war had not yet made sacred.

You should have seen him on the first day of mobilization, when the call to arms sounded suddenly along our sky, up till then so serene, and when, in a moment, he felt within his bosom the thrill of the soul of his ancestors, who so hardly won back the soil of his country from the forest and the sea, and who during so many centuries so fiercely resisted the covetousness of the foreigner.

You should have seen him, our little Belgian soldier, when, alone, on the bridge at Visé and before Liége, he confronted the German Colossus.

And this is already an item of history: a simple Belgian Division, the Third, supported by a mixed brigade, hurling backwards three German army corps four and a half miles. The enemy sent up fresh troops. One against five, the Belgians stood their ground and put more than 42,000 Germans out of action.

You should have seen him, our little Belgian soldier, on the morrow of that glorious defence of Liége, contesting the road into Central Belgium step by step with the terrible invader, who already saw his plan threatened with disaster; or fighting heroically at Eghezée, or at Haelen, or at Diest against an adversary overwhelmingly his superior, while along the highways and through the fields the people of Hesbaye, Hageland and Brabant fled, dumbly, sullenly, the horror in their eyes of the burnings and massacres which pursued them.

You should have seen him, our little Belgian soldier, when, hemmed in within the fortifications of Antwerp, where the German believed him to be reduced to impotence, he risked his life in daring sorties, harassing the Imperial Army, pushing his way once more to the very gates of ruined Aerschot, retaking Malines, forcing the Germans between the 9th and 12th of September to bring up towards Antwerp to encounter him, with all speed, two army corps, the Third and the Ninth, which were already on their way south; and collaborating thus, at the other extremity of the war, in that miraculous

victory of the Marne which has declared the issue of this war and made immortal the name of General Joffre.

And you should have seen him, our little Belgian soldier, or rather you should see him—for I speak now of the present moment—in our campaigns by the Yser, fighting still, fighting always, and this time upon that scrap of sacred soil to which now, with your valorous help, all our will to live and all our certitude of victory are attached.

This country of the Yser, our old Flemish sea-town, was, I believe, but a few months ago, the most peaceable and contented spot on which God's sun shone. Imagine, as far as the eye can reach, rich pastures intersected by canals and ditches and populous with towns and villages. Here and there white, low-built farms, with red-tiled roofs, were scattered through the green landscape. Rows of great trees, bent by the wind from the sea, indicated where ran the highroads. Along the western horizon lay dunes, like some fair garland. The canvas sails of windmills stood out clear against the sky.

A few squat towers, many rustic clock-towers, exquisite belfries, carved like lace, reminded one of those old religious, municipal, communal and artistic traditions which lay so near to the hearts of this thoughtful and energetic people.

To-day—ah! to-day—you must conceive a melancholy plain where, through a sky that is heavy with

fog, pass continually the screaming shrapnel and the bursting shell. The soil is mud, torn up by wagons, ploughed by projectiles, drenched in blood. Here and there floods have spread into great sheets of water wherein float rubbish and sometimes corpses. And upon this soil, since the 16th of October, men are fighting, destroying, killing one another.

How many farms lie in ashes! How many trees are prone! How many mills, towers and belfries are dead or wounded! Ypres, Loo, Nieuport, Dixmude—these are full of ruins. Villages that have been captured, retaken and lost again, such as Pervyse and Ramscapelle, have no longer one house standing. I have seen in one of their graveyards, where our soldiers have lately dug rustic graves for their comrades, in the earth which they have naïvely decorated with sand and shells, like those little altars which, in May, the children build by the side of our roads—I have seen this: the sacrilegious shells smashing the crosses, tearing open graves that have been hardly closed and profaning the dead.

There, in this corner of sacred soil, so dear to our hearts—ah! it is there that you should see our little Belgian soldier. I will not pretend that his appearance is always of a correctness worthy of the parade ground, that he is always freshly shaved, or that he never lacks a button on his cape.

I have found there friends whom I had known last summer, charming, modest lads, transformed

into bearded veterans in uniforms faded and worn, stained with mud, fog and rain—which forms a sort of natural khaki—their boots stained with the water of the trenches, their rifles blackened with use. And often what poor rags are upon their bodies, what worn-out linen—torn, and in holes everywhere! "You see, we wear lace for our fighting," said one of these young poilus to me gaily, while he displayed before my eyes this glorious kind of luxury.

But, for all that, what a will to stand fast and to live again, if need be, through those October days when, forced, cost what it might, to bar the Calais road against the German flood, they fought like paladins, aided from afar by the ships of Britain, and having alongside of them, their rivals in bravery, Admiral Ronarch's French marines, those whom the enemy has nicknamed "the young ladies with the red pompoms."

What an ardour glows in their eyes when one evokes the vision of their villages, the memory of the friends who wait for them—perhaps, for what fate have they themselves encountered?—over there, behind the firing-line, bowed beneath the yoke of the enemy!

What an heroic simplicity, uniting the humour of the Walloon, the tenacity of the Fleming and all our old *bourgeois* virtues, wherein to-day works a new leaven of which formerly we knew nothing—Hate!

And again what pride in serving under a young King—no, by the side of a young King, *sans peur et sans reproche*, who, no more beside the Yser than at Antwerp or at Hofstade, abandons them for a day or an hour, who, with them, braves the dangers of the front and, in the trenches, fills their hearts with his own confidence and strength—this King, of whom M. Paul Deschanel said the other day that "his name will be blessed so long as honour dwells in the heart of man."

And then, you know well enough where also he should be seen, our little Belgian soldier, where you have seen him, where you see him still. In those hospitals and those ambulances where our wounded and sick lie scattered in their thousands throughout England and France, and even in your own homes. They suffer not alone from their wounds. However kindly his reception may be, however perfect the attendance that he enjoys, he lies there, our little soldier, far from his own people, often without news of them, and it is amongst people, no doubt compassionate but whose tongue he often cannot speak, that he must resign himself perhaps to die; and this he will do quite simply, and with the single regret that he has not lived long enough to see his own country freed from the presence of a hated race.

Yes, indeed, that little soldier of ours is worthy to fight shoulder to shoulder with your own, to carry on his noble task beside the good soldier of

France, sung by Déroulède and praised by Mun, and the brave soldier of England, whom Kipling understands so well. He deserves that you should love him as you do, and that you should not only surround him with your sympathies, but also, as do the admirable organizations here represented to-day, do something to assure to him, for his clothing, his health, his idleness, and his correspondence, not only that which is absolutely essential, but also some small superfluity which, for a soldier, is so very like that which, for us, is indispensable.

* * *

Ah ! but it is touching, this love of one's fellows to which such organizations as these of yours testify.

We speak of the horrors of war ; and God knows if we have cause.

But who does not see its beauty also ?

I am not thinking only of those manly virtues which teach decision, initiative, the art of command and that of obeying, nor of those patriotic virtues which subordinate to national unity all domestic differences and jealousies, nor even of those still more intimate virtues which give rise to-day, in so many homes, to so much unknown heroism, and in which families discover, even in the midst of the bitterest grief, the secret of their solidarity, children gain unforgettable examples, and nations learn to perceive the riches, not the most obvious, but the most certain, of their moral inheritance.

I think rather of that broad spirit of fraternity which devotes to the service of the victims of war all those who, for whatever reason, find themselves unable themselves to fight.

Where to-day will you find the indifferent, the egotistical, those Olympian persons who defied emotion to affect them ?

Already the war of 1870 had dealt them a shrewd blow. And you may remember the beautiful verse of Sully-Prudhomme :

Un soupir, né du mal autour de moi souffert,
M'est venu des cités et des champs de bataille
Poussé par l'orphelin, le pauvre sur la paille
Et le soldat blessé qui sent son cœur ouvert.

How may we remain deaf to these complaints ? He who would wish to do so, could not.

Je ne puis, ce souvenir m'obsède comme un blâme !
Quelque chose d'humain a traversé mon âme
Et j'ai tous les soucis de la fraternité.

And who will first of all make trial of this happy law ; who will best respond to it ? Who but woman ?

Her heart seldom recks anything of reasons, but only of warm impulses which our male reason does not understand. Her more delicate senses are gifted with a more subtle perception of practical detail and of small differences.

Again, with what admirable examples of this fraternal spirit does woman present us every hour of this war ! All women, no matter what

their education or their rank may be, from that poor flower-woman of the Halles who, the other day, as a funeral passed along, stripped her basket bare in order to adorn with flowers the coffin of a soldier whose name she did not know, to those great ladies for whom wealth and birth are only arguments in favour of a humble devotion, to that Queen Elizabeth who stays by the side of the King and the Army, who shares all their dangers, who is everywhere to be found by the pillow of the wounded and the sick, and to whom the other day a poor dying fellow, his eyelids already closing, his hands already trembling in the death agony, uttered with pale lips that ineffable word which in itself sums up all tenderness and grief : Mother.

* * *

Catholic theology knows a dogma of a profound splendour which is called the Communion of Saints. According to this doctrine, all those who have been true to the Faith, living or dead, throughout time and space, are working, hoping, praying, suffering, for a single one amongst them all. The martyrs have shed their pure blood, the confessors have fought the good fight, the virgins have risen before the dawn to add their company to that of the stars—an infinite multitude sings there on high, an infinite multitude weeps yonder beneath, an infinite multitude fights here on earth—all this, Church militant, Church suffering, Church triumphant, all this for a single

unknown being, in order that the least among us may be helped and comforted and saved.

Do you not feel that this beautiful doctrine finds, in the formidable crisis which to-day convulses the earth, a most striking application ?

Here also is a common and immortal task, which to-day unites into one society millions of souls who, individually, are unaware of one another's existence. And in this communion the past, the present and the future of our races, of our countries, of our families, meet together and work together to the same ends. All the thinkers and workers, the crusaders, the knights and commoners of long ago, the soldiers of yesterday and of to-day, the priests who pray and give consolation, the learned teachers, the artists who thrill us with noble passion, the workmen who toil, the women who weave, who nurse, who cheer, all who live and fight and die beneath our flags, I see them leagued together for the same vast piece of work of which each one of us must feel the benefit. It is for each one of us that all humanity that is worthy of the name fights, suffers and works to-day. Let our own souls mount to the height of this noble conception, so well fitted to arouse our enthusiasm, and let us do honour to this sacred alliance wherein are commingled all those hopes, each day more thoroughly justified, for the triumph of Right over brutal Force, of Civilization over Barbarism, and of Justice over Falsehood.

THE NATIONAL FÊTE AT THE FRONT

A letter to the Courrier de l'Armée *on the occasion of the National Fête on the 21st of July* 1915.

DEAR SOLDIERS,—

Do you remember our Twenty-firsts of July in the days before the war?

On this day, Brussels and its suburbs awoke, a little later than usual, to the echoes of a harmless cannonade "fired," according to the posters, "by the artillery of the Civic Guard." From that moment the official programme, with its anticipated delights, was carried out in conformity with the traditional ceremonies advertised each year in the *Moniteur Belge*. Pouring from all sides into the capital by the North, South and Luxembourg stations, streams of holiday-making country folk arrived to swell the throng of citizens. Little by little, in the wake of heavy banners covered with tinkling medals, accompanied by the blaring of brass and the thumping of drums, the societies of every kind, each headed by an important-looking president in his dress-suit and silk hat, got under way and moved in the direction of the Grand'Place, with a step that was more or less military. In the vicinity of the Palais des Académies and the Cinquantenaire, there was a sea of heads wherein the advances, the pauses and the eddies of an ill-ordered crowd jostled numerous

simple souls, weighed down with parcels and children, who proudly displayed the new and glittering insignia of the *Mutualité* or the *Sauvetage* Societies. The *Te Deum* marked the culmination of the festivity. From the Treurenberg the idlers, kept in order by the lines of soldiers, policemen and superb gendarmes, pressed together to see the carriages which were being escorted to Sainte-Gudule, and well-informed persons pointed out the famous people whose formal profiles and glittering uniforms were to be seen through the glass of the carriage doors. After which a tradition equally venerable and less exhausting demanded that at the Grand-Sablon, where the tournament of *la petite balle au tamis* was played, the head of the Government, glass in hand and turning towards M. de Mot or M. Max, would celebrate the virtues of the "lambic" of Brussels. Hardly had it taken its fill of regattas, balloon ascents, festivals, processions and matches, when the crowd hastened to witness the free representations in French and Flemish, forming into long queues at the doors of the theatres. And the town and its suburbs went to their beds that night a little later than usual, after having hailed with their last cries of admiration the last bouquets of fireworks let off in the Bois by Messrs. Ricard.

Such was our Twenty-first of July at Brussels. And in the provinces, with but slight variations, it was wont to pass after the same fashion. And all that sort of thing, we may as well admit it, did

not make any very exalted appeal to the imagination and sentiments of the crowd.

I am mistaken. There was one event which, so long as life permitted, always introduced into this rather commonplace programme a note of true emotion and the purest patriotism. This was the appearance of the old heroes of 1830, whose bodies, though bowed with age, held themselves proudly on this day, wearing the old blue blouse fastened by the cartridge-belt, and whose heads, though grey and trembling, recaptured something of their martial carriage under the trim cap of astrakhan adorned with its tricolour cockade.

And I remember how, on the Twenty-first of July 1905, at the time of the marvellous fête of the Place Poelaert, when King Leopold, Prince Albert, Princess Elizabeth and our little Princes went to salute those veterans of our most glorious time who sat in the place of honour, a thrill ran through the whole vast crowd, and I know more than one heart which swelled with emotion and more than one eye which was moist with tears. That little band of veterans called up before us an heroic age. They represented for us the Days of September, with their barricades, their fusillades in the Park and the fighting at Berchem and Borgerhout. Better still, they brought back to our memories all the obstinate effort of a nation which had so long been resolved to live its own life—which, in 1830, through the energy and union of its sons reached at last its goal, where it meant most assuredly to remain.

And it is of those old men, the Fathers of their Country, that I think first of all, now that this National Fête of the Twenty-first of July 1915 has dawned.

Ah! this Twenty-first of July, our King will not spend it in official ceremonies nor in popular rejoicings. He will give it to his noble business of soldiering, surrounded by our Army, there in that inviolate corner of our land where Leopold I first set foot on Belgian soil in July 1831.

The salvoes which to-day awaken you, dear sons of our Nation in Arms, are those which carry death from afar into your ranks or the ranks of your enemies. Instead of the "*flons-flons*" of the trumpets, you will listen to the orders which are passed along in whispers through the trenches. The ascents which your eyes will follow into the clouds will be the daring flights of the Taubes or the bomb-dropping Aviatiks. Your Bengal Lights will be perhaps those asphyxiating gases which Kultur at Bay unleashes upon you.

As for the men of 1830, they have obtained from Heaven their last discharge. But a little time before the war the last of them fell into his last sleep. He lies, like his comrades, beneath that soil which their common efforts have made free.

The last combatants of 1830 are with us no longer. But *you* are here, you heroes of Liége, of Haelen, of Hofstade and of the Yser.

And, thanks to you, how noble is the National

Fête which Belgium celebrates to-day! Yes, nobler than our most famous "ommeganck" and "landjuweel" of other days, more beautiful than the Song of Roland, fairer than all the epics of long ago!

And how different she is from the peaceful image that we formed of her, hardly a year ago, this Belgium of to-day which rises in your midst, like some loving mother who, having rocked you in her arms and having then watched over your childhood and youth, over your homes, your fields, your labours and your sorrows, calls you now to her aid, to revenge her wrongs, to save the city, to win back the altars that have been cast down, the tombs of your ancestors, the cradles of your children.

I know full well, dear soldiers of my homeland—for I know you well—you have no love for fine speeches.

But it is no vain talk, I think, on a day so solemn as this, to call up to your thoughts all the forces that are fighting on your side, that you may feel, stronger than ever, all the pride of your estate; that the frank comradeship which holds you together may thereby become more close than before; that your hearts may thence draw, if it be possible, yet greater courage and tenacity.

It is all our present that fights for you.

Invaded Belgium endures with patience a cruel servitude, because she looks to you for deliverance.

Scattered Belgium supports without complaint all the deprivations and longings of exile, because she looks to you to bring her home again.

All our past fights for you, too: the Belgians of Ambiorix who defended their soil against the greed of Rome; those who, led by a Charles Martel or a Godfrey of Bouillon, battled for the civilization of the West; the men of the communes, who, at the side of Breydel and De Coninck, poured out their red blood for their liberties, like the Franchimontois of Josse de Strailhe, who sacrificed their lives to avenge the city of Liége that a perjured king had betrayed.

All humanity worthy of the name is fighting for you, since your bravery is to set free not only Belgium, but Europe herself, threatened as she is for a moment by the Prussian monster—not only to set Europe free, but the Universal Conscience, in whose eyes you stand for respect for that given word which is the very basis of civilization and of God's Law.

Finally, all our future fights for you.

Your will, your discipline, your courage have with them and behind them the fate of our children, who will owe it to you that they are free men and that they bear—and with what pride!—that name of Belgian, which to-day shines with the noblest splendour.

In the National Fêtes that are to come, it is to you that those children will pay their most enthusiastic homage.

They will learn to honour the conquerors of the Yser as the new Fathers of their Country.

And when you in your turn shall be old men, it will be yours to sit, during the *Te Deums* and the

patriotic rejoicings, in those places of honour where our glorious veterans of 1830 used to sit, and it is towards you that the gratitude of a whole people shall ascend.

Think of that, dear soldiers of to-day, upon this Twenty-first of July 1915.

Think of it when in your camp you sing that fine verse of the Brabançonne, that which we ought all to adopt as the simplest and the best, and every line of which says so well, in its own style of 1830, that which all have felt ever since: that stanza whose echoes will thrill—as in the famous ballade—over there, beyond the battle lines, through the bones of our men of 1830—here, on this side of it, behind your trenches, through the corpses, hardly cold, of your glorious comrades whose simple crosses decorate like flowers this soil of their fatherland which their courage and yours have heroically defended:

O Belgique, ô Mère chérie,
A toi nos cœurs, à toi nos bras,
A toi notre sang, ô Patrie!
Nous le jurons tous, oui, tu vivras!
Tu vivras toujours grande et belle,
Et ton invincible unité
Aura pour devise immortelle:
Le Roi, la Loi, la Liberté!

LIÉGE AND THE YSER

NATIONAL anniversaries are landings arranged by History upon the staircase of the centuries. They offer to a people periodical seasons for collecting

its thoughts and for seeking in the lessons of the past teaching whence the efforts of the morrow may profit.

Belgium, before the war, knew but one official anniversary—the Twenty-first of July, the date of the accession of our dynasty and one in which a regard for Dutch feelings had merged the commemoration of the independence won during September 1830. We also celebrated, without any Act of Parliament having given to this ceremony the character of a legal institution, the date of the King's patron saint, St. Leopold, and then St. Albert.

But an intruder, the war, has come to mark with its tragic and bloodstained finger, in the calendar of our national life, new and ineffaceable anniversaries.

First of all there is the date of the 4th of August. Upon this day, in that year of horror 1914, about ten o'clock in the morning, was consummated, by the violation of our soil, the most flagrant and, without doubt, the most odious crime of modern history. At the same moment and at a blow, a unanimous access of indignation laid hold upon the national conscience, and Belgian Unity was definitely consolidated in blood and tears.

I could wish that, after the war, throughout liberated Belgium, each year, on the 4th of August at ten o'clock in the morning, the activity of work, both intellectual and manual, may for a moment

cease, and that then, in the silence of courts, schools, workshops, factories, fields, offices and shops, word and movement being suspended, as in the Mass during the consecration of the Host and the Chalice, all the bells, from one end of the country to the other, from Visé to La Panne, from Antwerp to Virton, may be set ringing to sound the alarm, as in the times of the Klokke Roland of Ghent and the Ban Henri of Liége.

With regular and solemn strokes, from city to city, from village to village, the bells of the churches and the belfries, even those of the schools and the factories, shall recall to every one, great and small alike, the perjury of Germany and the response of Belgium—the shame of the one and the glory of the other. Recurring thus regularly to stay the stream of forgetfulness, that solemn knell shall revive in our souls and those of our children, simultaneously with the sacred memory of heroic deeds, of mourning and of ruin, the sentiment of our Unity and our readiness for those sacrifices which the defence of the country will continue to demand of each one of us. And I believe that the echo of those pealing bells will be heard beyond our sea and land frontiers, as a sort of universal lesson. It will each year call to memory anew the contrast between the cynical language used on that day in the Reichstag by the German Chancellor and the noble words which at the same moment King Albert addressed to the representatives of the Belgian nation. It will

evoke, for eyes other than ours, the vision of the heroes and martyrs of the Right :

Ceux qui sont morts pour le monde, là-bas,
A Liége.[1]

A second anniversary must also be inscribed in any national calendar : that of the last days of October, during which our victorious resistance on the Yser reached its height.

At the moment when we were gathered by the Yser, on the 15th of October, the left wing of the French was still at La Bassée. Our infantry, to the number of 48,000, supported by 6,000 French marine fusiliers, had not had a moment's rest since the beginning of the campaign. Broken with fatigue, anxiety and lack of clothing, they seemed incapable of any further effort. First of all they were required to hold fast during forty-eight hours, unaided, upon a line of 40 kilometres, against the countless hordes of Germans who, from north and east, were moving against Calais. They stood their ground through fifteen days, in spite of their uniforms in rags, their failing limbs, their empty stomachs—in spite of the shells and the machine-guns, the rain and the mud; and thanks to them the pride of the enemy offensive in Belgium was definitely broken.

The lapse of time gives, little by little, to this great defensive battle, as well as to that of the Marne,

[1] Emile Verhaeren, *Les Ailes rouges de la Guerre.*

its true proportions, and assigns to it its proper measure of importance, like the height of those monuments which grow taller the further we move away from them.

If, instead of standing fast upon the Yser, our Army had given way, what, without any doubt, would have happened? For the general cause of the Entente it would have meant the establishment of the enemy at Dunkirk and Calais and the consolidation of his power, opposite the English coast, over those two great French ports at a time when the United Kingdom had not yet fully co-ordinated its forces. It would have meant the interception of all sea transport at its most vital point. It would have meant the envelopment of the common battle-line of the Allies. For Belgium in particular it would have meant not only the reduction of our Army to a status of sheer hazard, but also our legitimate authorities robbed of all the prestige which they gained from the retention of however small a strip of the national soil, and their exposure to those humiliations and those monstrous legal absurdities of which the recent bluff over Poland has enabled us to measure the audacity.

The results which have followed, and which will still follow, this battle of the latter end of October 1914 will not efface its importance and glory. From its own splendour, no less than from its strategic and political effects, it will remain in the history of our country as an event of the first order, worthy

to be commemorated as well by the present generation as by our remotest posterity.

This was the reason for the manifestation which took place at Havre on the 29th of October 1916. Such was the sentiment which was expressed in the masterly address given on that occasion by the head of the Belgian Cabinet, wherein criticism can find no fault, unless it be the silence which was maintained with regard to the part, of such importance, played during those glorious days by the Minister of War himself.

Such also was the meaning of the precious tribute offered to our Army by Admiral Lacaze, in the name of the French Government, and that of the marines who gave us such valiant support.

This finally was the cause of the beautiful book [1] which was devoted to this celebration, and which will keep its memory warm. Could we have desired for the Editing Committee of this publication a better assistant than Commandant Willy Breton, the historian, at once conscientious and eloquent, of our military glory ?

Set in motion by the Havre celebrations, the tradition of this anniversary will soon mingle its thread with the web of our national customs. From year to year, the end of October, thus consecrated, will allow those of us who lived while the Battle of the Yser was fought, and, later, those who shall

[1] *La Bataille de l'Yser : Commémoration de son deuxième anniversaire* (Paris, Berger-Levrault).

inherit the benefits of it, to discharge their debt towards the leaders who directed it and the soldiers who won it, towards the dead as towards those who survived. It will give them an opportunity of offering their tribute of admiration and gratitude, at once, to all the men who fought on the Yser, in that they contributed by the heroism of their deeds and their trials, whether at Dixmude, Tervaete, Nieuport, Schoobakke, Pervyse, or elsewhere, to the shattering of the German invasion and to the preservation of that inviolate and forever sacred corner of the Fatherland.

This inviolate corner our Army has never ceased to defend. And assuredly the memory of October 1914 will never cause us to forget or to fail to understand what tenacity, what skill, what heroism have been lavished there at every moment since that time.

Upon the day when Germany shall have been thrown back and shall have freed Belgium from her odious contamination, with what enthusiasm will our families—to-day scattered, but then reunited—overwhelm with the same gratitude all their defenders and all their liberators!

Into what ingenious and touching forms that gratitude will seek to translate itself we have already an indication in the reports which come to us from the occupied territory.

At the reopening of our Law Courts, in October 1916, M. du Pont, First President of the Cour de Cassation, speaking publicly in the Palais de Justice

at Brussels (of which a part has been turned into a guardroom by the enemy), after having called to his hearers' memory the warriors of 1830 who rest under the monument in the Place des Martyrs, added the following words:

"Ought we not, my dear colleagues, to bind ourselves with a vow? This building of ours is immense. The Salle des Pas-Perdus is limitless. Many colonnades here surround us. Innumerable are those long vestibules which the public and we ourselves traverse day by day. Do not these immense chambers offer a space sufficiently large whereon to trace upon their walls, in letters of gold, the names of all those brave men who have fallen with so much courage and valiant tenacity? In a place of honour, peculiarly visible, should appear, gloriously reunited, the names of the dead who belonged to the legal profession. In the midst of this magnificent memorial should shine finally two works by our most celebrated artists: on the one hand, 'Valour defending the Right,' showing King Albert giving the example to our intrepid legions; on the other, 'Charity, consoler of the dying Hero,' represented by Queen Elizabeth, that guardian angel who comforts by her sweet words and her motherly ministrations the brave victims of battle. How proudly thenceforward would our profession carry on its work in such a veritable national Pantheon, which should be still more worthy to bear its noble title of 'Palais de Justice.' After doing what lay in our powe

to share in the nation's sacrifices, it would be a veritable reward to us, and assuredly an immense honour, thus to take our part, day by day, in this homage which our glorious martyrs would receive."

Such a proposal not only gains a singular authority from the high station of the magistrate who has conceived it, and who himself is attached to the army by many ties of blood. It not only captures our attention from the dramatic nature of the circumstances in which, face to face with the enemy, its courageous author formulated it. Those who require of a national memorial something more than material wealth or beauty, will find in this suggestion the expression of a symbolism at once precise and profound. Is it not indeed in the temple of Justice that the names of those who have fallen in the cause of Justice should be inscribed? Having given their lives for fidelity to a contract—and it is upon respect for the given word that the whole social life of both nations and individuals reposes—will they not have deserved that their memory and their example should remain associated with the idea of human justice and its daily interpretation, that so that memory and that example may be cherished and perpetually renewed?

Other plans of the kind will doubtless be brought forward which will not interfere with this one and which its realization will in no way embarrass. That on which we must be resolved—and this is why it is to-day not too early to institute these

anniversaries and to begin to think about these commemorations—is to give to the defenders of their country their proper share of glory—glory, the Sun of the Dead—to assure to those who shall be born the lesson of so much heroism and sacrifice, so that they may prove ready to exhibit these virtues anew, on the day when our national honour shall again require it of them.

All the philosophy of History shows the truth of the advice given in the Book of the Maccabees: "Remember the exploits of your fathers and the things which they did in their time, and you shall gather from that memory a great joy and a name which shall never be lost."

TO THE VICTIMS OF DUTY

A speech made on the 14th of December 1915, in the Place d'Armes at Havre, on the occasion of the national funeral of the victims of the catastrophe of Graville-Sainte-Honorine (the explosion of the arsenal of the Belgian Army).

GENTLEMEN,—

As the mouthpiece of the whole Belgian nation, it is the sad and sacred duty of the King's Government to offer to the victims of the catastrophe of the 11th of December its most profound homage and its last farewell.

This first duty entails another, that of offering our warmest sympathy to those mourning French and Belgian families whom this catastrophe has smitten, and many of whom, at this very moment, are still unaware of their misfortune.

To the Government of the Republic, which has insisted on being represented here by one of its Ministers and one of its Under-Secretaries of State, to the authorities of the Department of Seine Inférieure, to those of the town of Havre and its neighbouring communes, to the directors of the industrial concern, which has also suffered loss, we ought and we wish to express both the sense of comradeship in sacrifice and all the gratitude which we feel for the generous impulse which leads them to join in our mourning.

If it is true that nothing more strongly unites us than suffering endured and courageously accepted in common, let us be thankful, gentlemen, that Fate is to-day prodigal of the opportunities which she affords us of proving and cementing the friendship of France and Belgium. And now that friendship, already so strictly united in the service of the same ideals of honour and liberty, watered each day during long months by the tears of our orphans and the blood of our martyrs and our soldiers, has recently been more firmly than ever welded—were it possible —by a terrible and mysterious blow.

It should have been the task of Baron de Broqueville, in his double rôle of Minister for War and head

of the Cabinet, to express here the sentiments of the Government. But the duties of his office have retained him with the Army, and he has begged me to express the regret which he feels at being unable to be present in person at this ceremony, at which he has instructed the head of his military cabinet to represent him. On the other hand, from the very first moment, he has done everything in his power to ensure that the moral and material consequences of the catastrophe shall be lessened, if not repaired.

In a few moments, in a few seconds, more than a hundred Belgian soldiers have died, the victims of their duty, the servants of their country.

Let us call them up before our memories. I see them, those honest workmen of ours, whom the first call to mobilization had surprised in the midst of their peaceful labours, strong toilers of our forges and our coal-mines, hastening from their humming hives of industry in Flanders or the Walloon districts, from that fair valley of the Meuse, from that black country of Hainault that thrilled throughout its length and breadth with that industrial activity which was one of the principal sources of our wealth and our pride. I see them, those good sons of our towns and our country-side, with their rather clumsy gait and their thoughtful, energetic faces, such as Constantin Meunier loved to trace. I hear them in their rough talk or singing the praises of their Flemish and Walloon provinces. One day, upon our peaceful

country where men still believed in the word given, the news of Germany's hateful perjury fell like a thunderbolt. Upon that day they offered their flesh and their blood to Belgium, quite simply and without any reserve. They too did their duty as soldiers in that unequal and heavy struggle for the soil of Belgium, defending her foot by foot, during more than two months and then in the historic campaign of the Yser. Some of them wounded in the war, but all chosen for their technical skill, they were given, in the national work, a new task which, under an intelligent and experienced chief, seemed to call them back to their former occupations. And then came another thunderbolt! And now we see them around us in their nameless coffins, officers and soldiers, Flemings and Walloons, their limbs mingled together and scattered, but reunited all in death, as they were in their toil and their military duty.

Of a truth its echoes were heard afar, that thunder-clap—much farther than this fair region of Normandy which teaches us every day to appreciate more truly the warmth of its welcome. It echoed dismally in our camps and our trenches, in the ears of our soldiers whose good comrades and fellow-workmen these dead had been. But still farther did its sound carry—far beyond the firing-line, into the very heart of suffering Belgium; and I think of those women and children who have remained yonder, of the hearts of those fathers and mothers, of the anguish

of questioning families, whose agony will be prolonged, whether by the absence of news, or perhaps—worse still—by the exaggeration of the reports which will filter through the poisonous vapours of the German news service.

Let them know, however, that when their loss shall have been established, our grief—the grief of us all—will have anticipated their own and that it will have associated from to-day, in one common admiration, in one common prayer to God, together with the thousands of our soldiers who have fallen on the field of honour, that company that Commandant Stevens directed, and those French workmen, their brothers in toil, whom the same death has overtaken. For it is as good service to one's country to renew and add to those munitions which will one day give her a lasting victory. And for him who dies in that service there will shine also a ray of moral beauty on his name for the consolation and just pride of his children. Upon his pale and bleeding brow too the lips of his grateful country shall be pressed.

Amidst the din of the war through which we are passing these victims now rest in peace. And that peace is of the Light which never dies.

We, gentlemen, shall return to the struggle and to our work. Cruel though this catastrophe may be, there is not amongst us one who will allow it for an instant to diminish his courage. When one soldier falls, another takes his place. Where one workshop

is destroyed, two others shall arise to-morrow. The steel of our hearts—which neither the horrors of the invasion, the mourning and ruin that have been heaped up, the pangs of separation, the longings and the hardships of exile, the poison even of slander, have been able to corrode—nothing shall prove capable of affecting so long as it may impair the unity of our national life, the ardour of our determination to fight on and our absolute certainty of victory.

We can be very strong, gentlemen, while we hold, within our untroubled souls, the knowledge that we are working for the Right.

"It is not," says Carlyle truly, "that which a man has or has not outside himself which constitutes his happiness or his misery. Nakedness, hunger, distress of every kind, death itself, have been suffered courageously, when the heart has been right."

Those whom we should pity are they who do evil and who have felt and even admitted that they do it. The true misery is the decay of the soul, the shame without remedy of those who, knowing that they commit injustice and, attempting a moment to deceive themselves by the sophisms of their Kultur or the cynicism of their pride, heap up corpses and ruins without even succeeding in raising them as high as the scorn of honourable men and the reproaches of that Eternal Truth which they will never stifle, no, not even in their own souls.

No man may forever stifle the Right. Soon or late, its hour will come.

And that hour—we know that it is coming. After the Passion has been endured, it will sound for us the Redemption, that is to say, Liberation and Glory.

Dear victims, whose names we scarcely know, and who will not, you too, have died in vain, take now your last rest in that heavenly peace which the country promises to her good servants who have fallen for her and which the Christian faith assures to them. Take your rest in the shadow of these two dear flags which brotherhood unites—that of Belgium, the symbol of desecrated Justice, and that of France which, faithful to its destiny and its glory, embodies the liberty of the Nations. And may you soon, in their shadow, thrill to the loud echoes of a victory which we shall share in common.

III

THE PEOPLE

THE ENDURANCE OF THE BELGIAN PEOPLE

A speech delivered on the 17th of May 1915 *in the Town Hall of Saint-Etienne.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

Allow me to make a confession to you. When I received the invitation of the authorities of the Department of the Loire and of this great city to address you, honourable and pressing though the invitation was, I hesitated at first to accept it.

We are living to-day through times both serious and pathetic, to which the motto of Hoche, *Res, non verba,* is singularly appropriate. This very morning I read, in a Paris newspaper, this reflection of a humorous writer: "In time of war the first useless mouths are those of the politicians."

In spite of this scruple, I stand, however, before you to-day, and it appears to me that I have more than one duty to accomplish here.

Was it not becoming that, after having paid our homage to Paris, we should also come to salute that French province, and particularly these districts of Forez and Lyonnais, wherein so many of our working people are being so generously entertained?

It seems to us that it is precisely in your part of the country that the fortunate diversity of the French temperament declares itself under certain aspects which we Belgians could desire ourselves to exhibit : the respect, namely, for family traditions, the domestic virtues and hospitality, the maintenance of a sane balance between intelligence and goodwill, initiative and an unwearying diligence in affairs of industry and commerce, a serious outlook upon life and a passion for progress.

It is for these reasons that I have consented, ladies and gentlemen, to be the bearer to you of the greeting of the King's Government and its deep gratitude for what you have done and are doing every day for our refugees. Your public authorities and your private enterprises, the heads of the department and of the town and our Consul and his assistants, all have interested themselves in their cause, adding to that interest, as the President of the Republic promised us when we landed at Havre, " all the warmth of a brotherly affection."

It is this same brotherly affection which makes your hospitality at once so thorough and so tactful. This it is which has brought into being, for the benefit of an unfortunate people who have been driven from their homes by a veritable invasion of Barbarians, and that, one of the most atrocious which History can show, so many ingenious organizations destined to temper for them the bitterness of their poverty, their grief and their exile.

It is this which expresses itself to-day in the courtesy with which you have received me and by the eagerness with which you have come here to listen to yet another voice that is to speak about Belgium.

To this duty which I desire to perform must be added a certain hope in which I know you will pardon any presumption that there may be.

It seems to me, coming as I do directly from the battle front and having been enabled on many occasions, during these latter months of the war, to pass through not only the Belgian lines, but also those of the French and the British, having on the other hand had occasion to obtain very trustworthy information about the spirit of those of our provinces and of your departments which have been invaded —it seems to me that perhaps, chatting together about those places, we may be able to come to some understanding of that marvellous atmosphere of courage and confidence which surrounds not only the men who are fighting, but also those of our fellow-countrymen who remain prisoners upon their own soil.

Ah! believe me—civilians though we be—we do not mean to allow ourselves to be outdone in tenacity and endurance by our heroes in the trenches. This fair land of France—which superficial critics accused at one time of being degenerate—what a marvellous example of moral resilience and physical health, of simple heroism, of harmonious beauty, she has given during ten months to an admiring

world! And how, in every rank of her society, the French soul has appeared truly as the mistress of the body which it animates. But this calm energy, this unyielding determination, if they are to be found everywhere in France, nowhere are they exhibited so perfectly as in the midst of the Army, among the valiant soldiers of France, England and Belgium, who, at this very moment, only six or seven hundred kilometres from this spot, are at grips with all the difficulties and vicissitudes of their gigantic struggle.

I am mistaken. There is a place where, perhaps, confidence in the final triumph is still more extraordinary and where it is certainly more touching: I mean on the other side of the firing-line, in those occupied regions where our fellow-countrymen, yours as well as ours, in spite of nameless sufferings, have not for one single instant permitted their hope and their endurance to falter.

* * *

We, who count among those compatriots, separated from us for a while, children, parents, friends—let us transport ourselves in thought into their midst.

May the same strength under tribulation which sustains our invaded provinces arouse our own resolve, so that in this sacred communion we may find food for that beneficial and balanced optimism which is becoming, more and more, an essential factor of victory.

"Before the war," as our poet, Emile Verhaeren, justly observes, "Belgium was a country both peaceful, industrious and rich. The centuries had moulded her with a kindly hand. Twice, in the course of history, her art had dominated Europe. . . . If ever a people had shown itself worthy to collaborate, with its independent and lofty spirit, in the work of the civilization of the world, it was truly the Belgian nation."

This nation dwelt under the protection of five Great Powers, who had imposed upon it and guaranteed to it a permanent neutrality, to which it had remained invariably faithful. Its life was a happy one, and each day brought us further good reason for admiring this courageous people, this small Fatherland, this slowly and patiently wrought work to which the efforts of our workmen, both manual and intellectual, had alike contributed and which rejoiced to see itself, as it were, embodied in the personality of a young, brilliant and active King.

War! How few of us had seriously contemplated it. The danger of being attacked by Germany? Had she nourished such a suspicion, Belgium would have been instantly accused by Germany of failing in her duty of neutrality towards her. What an outrage upon the King of Prussia, who had promised under oath in 1839, for himself and his successors, to carry out and observe the treaty of neutrality in all its points and articles without exception, and not to suffer others to violate it! Had not this oath been

confirmed many times since then? At the instance of Gladstone it was renewed in 1870, at the time when the Franco-German War broke out. In the course of official visits and diplomatic conversations the same guarantees had been lavished upon us. In 1905 the Ambassador of Germany at Brussels reminded us that respect for the neutrality of Belgium was an article of Germany's faith. In 1907 Germany put her signature at The Hague to that axiom of International Law: "The territory of neutral Powers is inviolable." In 1910 the Kaiser came to Brussels, accompanied by the Empress and Princess Victoria Louise; nor did he fail to give utterance to a wealth of protestations of sympathy for our country and our reigning House.

On the 29th of April 1913, in reply to questions asked in the Reichstag, Herr von Jagow, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Herr von Heeringen, Minister for War, declared: "The neutrality of Belgium is determined by international Conventions, and Germany is resolved to respect those Conventions." In the month of November 1913, King Albert, who, in accordance with the courtesies which are practised between monarchs, had been appointed Honorary Colonel of the 16th Hanoverian Dragoons, went to pay a visit to his regiment at Lunebourg. He was received and abundantly complimented by General von Emmich. . . . Less than nine months later, Germany suddenly attacked this little country which she had sworn to protect and General von

Emmich was in command of the forces that carried out the assault upon the fortress of Liége.

What had happened? As late as the 2nd of August the German Ambassador at Brussels had given during the afternoon the assurance that we had nothing to fear from our neighbours on the east. The same evening, at seven o'clock, he handed to us the outrageous ultimatum which left us the choice between two alternatives: to allow Germany to violate our neutrality in order to take France by surprise, and in this case to receive, together with the Imperial friendship, the price of such a piece of treason, or else to be treated as enemies by the most formidable military Power in the world. Could Germany allege the smallest complaint against us? Not one. The famous declaration of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg of the 4th of August admits that the Right was unjustly violated in our person and offers but the one excuse—and what an excuse! The wish to attack France more quickly and more easily! At the very moment when the First Army Corps of Germany fell before Liége upon the Third Belgian Division, our Ambassador at Berlin, Baron Beyens, was still asking Herr von Jagow: "Can you reproach us with anything at all? Have we not accomplished everything which the duties of our neutrality required?" And Herr von Jagow had replied: "Germany has nothing with which to reproach Belgium. Your attitude has always been of an exemplary correctness."

The whole drama is made manifest in these few sentences :

The loyalty of a little country upon which the Powers had imposed a perpetual neutrality as the very foundation of its international existence, and which was careful scrupulously to observe the duties which she had undertaken.

The duplicity of one of those Powers which, having assumed the obligation to guarantee the independence and neutrality of Belgium, continued up to the last moment to deceive her with regard to its true intentions.

A psychological and moral mistake on the part of this same Power, which believes that treaties of the most solemn kind are nothing, for others as for itself, from the moment when they become embarrassing, but " scraps of paper."

The simple honesty of the little neutral country which means to remain faithful to her sworn faith, let it cost her what it may.

Since then a year has gone by.

The enemy believed that he would enter Paris on the 15th of August 1914. Well, on that day General Leman held him still in check before Liége.

All his plan was to crush France to the earth in an overwhelming offensive ; then to turn upon the Russian Bear. " To move quickly," said Herr von Jagow to Sir Edward Goschen on the 4th of August, " that is the trump card of Germany. That of Russia is her inexhaustible resources of men." Germany

staked her future upon her rapidity. She lost the trick. And now, after ten months of furious effort, she has not yet succeeded in destroying the Belgian Army, which, more seasoned to war and more courageous than ever, continues to confront her on Belgian soil under the leadership of King Albert, while by its side the armies of France and England stand, more united, stronger, more determined and better armed than on the first day of the war.

And in the same way, after these ten months, the moral resistance which more than seven million Belgians are opposing to the invasion has only grown stronger.

To the shameful massacres, burnings and pillage, to the base tricks to which the enemy resorts in order to terrorize or sow dissension among the people, an endurance every day more firm, a patriotism every hour more splendid, give their answer. "What since the beginning of the war," asks Maurice Barrès, in one of those masterly passages which have strengthened so many hearts and elevated so many minds, "has appeared in the world that is truly new? Millions of corpses, whole countries in flames, nations delivered over to torment? These things are not so novel. But that which no one on earth has ever seen is the moral splendour of which we are the witnesses and these millions of transfigured souls amongst which we are to-day living.

"Throughout the invaded districts and elsewhere, in all the families which the war has directly affected,

the petty thoughts of every day have been swept away like so much dust, and one perceives the divine basis of all things. I mean something eternal and infinite, a power always the same throughout the ages, an ardent passion of devotion, of sacrifice and self-emulation."

The resistance of the free soul beneath the German terror is for us a just cause of pride, while it more and more disconcerts the psychology of our enemies.

You have heard of the courage of my brave friend Adolphe Max, the Mayor of Brussels, to-day a prisoner with so many others in the gaols of Prussia.

You have read that already historic letter of Cardinal Mercier, where, in such noble words, breaks forth the protest of the Christian conscience.

And how many other things, less known but characteristic each in its own degree, could I add to these!

On the day after the occupation of Brussels, the Germans had transformed our monumental Palais de Justice into I know not what barracks which rapidly became a sink of iniquity. Entrance was denied to all but holders of passes sparingly distributed, and the Judges had at their disposal for the conduct of trials only a few rooms that were difficult of access. The Cour de Cassation replied to this procedure by delivering a judgment which reversed one of the Court of First Instance. This judgment alleged as its authority Article 96 of our

Constitution, which insists upon the publicity of trials, "and because," says the judgment, "the measures adopted by the German authorities make this publicity a sham." The lesson was a bold one, and it was understood.

More recently, the German Governor having issued, in flagrant violation of the Hague Convention, two decrees which affected the principles of our civil legislation, the Council of the Order of Advocates of Brussels, in a memorandum perfect in its reasoning and tone and drawn up by M. Theodor, the President, protested against this new violation of International Law. The Governor threatened. The protest of the Bar was no less firm.

In all ranks of society a similar dignified resistance expresses the same patriotism. Side by side with the clergy, our *bourgeoisie* exhibits an admirable attitude, and at the same time the most accomplished skill and the most energetic activity in those works of consolidation and assistance which it has organized everywhere.

It is the same with our industrial and working populations. You know how profound is our indigence. Belgium's busy hive of industry is condemned to idleness. No more exports, in a country where seven-tenths of the industrial output, in normal times, find their way abroad. Hardly any means of transport exist. The whole youth of the country is with the armies. Moreover, our spinning-mills and our clothworks have seen the raw material

requisitioned or stolen. From many factories the machinery has been removed. Our miners are working no more than three days a week at the maintenance of the tunnels and the production of a little coal. Our metal-workers earn seven to eight francs, not per day but per week. German figures published on the 8th of May last give the number of our unemployed as 742,234. Out of seven million Belgians still in the country it is reckoned that more than three millions—three millions, I say—are living upon charity.

Yet these starving workmen might have work and large wages if they chose. But they know that from this work the enemy would profit, directly or indirectly. That is enough reason for them to refuse it. At Malines and Charleroi the Germans have offered them as much as ten marks a day. But our workmen do not seek bread at that price. Abandoning the hope of winning them by the bait of high wages, the invader now seeks to subdue their spirit by threats and punishment.

Let me tell you—I could give you many other instances of the kind—what happened at Luttre a few weeks ago.

In this Hainault commune there is a workshop of the Belgian State Railway. On the 23rd of March last, the German authorities posted a notice in the workrooms of this place which insisted upon the men returning to work. On the 21st of April two hundred workmen were demanded. On the 29th of April

soldiers came to requisition them in their houses and brought them to the workshop. If any of them were away from their homes, a member of their family was arrested.

Nevertheless the workmen maintain their refusal to work. They are not willing to co-operate in this war against their country. They know, as does every one in Belgium, that the trains which run over our railway lines can only assist the German Army in its operations against the armies of Belgium and her Allies. They have on their side the definite language of Article 54 of the Hague Convention, which was—a bitter jest—proposed at the Second Congress by the delegates of Germany.

What do our unscrupulous enemies do now?

Not having at their disposal buildings sufficient to imprison these obstinate workmen, they shut them up, on the 30th of April, in railway carriages. On the 4th of May, twenty-four of them are brought before a court-martial at Mons and are charged with having belonged to a secret society whose object is to embarrass the execution of the military projects of Germany. They are condemned to imprisonment.

On the 8th of May forty-eight workmen are sent into Germany, God knows to what destination. On the 14th of May, forty-five others meet with the same fate. At their departure the entire population, massed around the approaches to the station, acclaim these brave fellows with cries of "Long live Belgium!" and they reply in the same words. Only a moment

ago I have learnt that their comrades, who have in spite of everything maintained their patriotic attitude, are about to be embarked in their turn in railway trucks and deported into an unknown country, far from everything that is theirs—their wives, their children and their homes. And why? For not having been willing to suffer Right to bow before Force or to abandon their honour for the sake of their interest.

Gentlemen, let us honour these "hard heads," as Charles the Bold would have called them, these modest but heroic workers who prefer to suffer all things rather than that the Right should be violated through them. In their spontaneous movement of revolt we see reproduced and symbolized the whole history of Belgium, that pathway of Justice.

* * *

In every class of the population this steadfastness, which nothing has been able or will be able to bend, is accompanied by a deep scorn for those who have built up in our midst so vast a structure of falsehood, cowardice and cruelty. The Germans are so simple as to be astonished at this circumstance. Listen to what one of them writes. Dr. Richard Bahr, who has been conducting some enquiries in Belgium, says:

"What animates the Belgians is less a patriotic grief than a cold hostility which is perpetually fed from new sources.

" In a café one cannot sit down beside them without the painful feeling that disdain and hate have also taken their places at table."

This scorn expresses itself in a kind of irony which the Germans feel hovering everywhere around them.

Here the women excel.

The other day a young girl was walking along the street in Liége, wearing the smart little policeman's cap which our soldiers also wear. A recent notice had forbidden the wearing of these caps. An official rushed forward to tear off the proof of offence. " It's easier to take than Calais, is it not, sir?" said the girl.

I like also this inspiration of a Flemish innkeeper, near Antwerp, above the door of whose café was the sign, fairly common in our provinces, *In den Keyser*, which is to say " To the Emperor." This innkeeper contented himself with suppressing one letter, the K, that is so dear to the Germans. His café to-day is called *In den Yser*—" To the Yser "—and this is by no means the same thing.

The street-boys of Brussels, the " Ketjes," as we call them, cultivate a form of humour quite their own. Some of these children—and you know what is the favourite game of all children in these days—were carrying out military manœuvres in one of the suburban squares of Brussels. In imitation of the Germans, they had pushed up through their little caps certain sharp-pointed carrots, so as to simulate as well as they could the pointed German helmet.

Then with all solemnity, under the command of the eldest amongst them, they performed the "parade-marsch," that grotesque "goose-step" which is one of the gems of German military scientific discovery. Some soldiers and officers stood watching this boyish performance and smiling. Suddenly the leader of the small band, turning round as he marched, gave his men, in a trumpet voice, the order "Nach Paris!" And instantly the boys with the same mechanical movement continued their "goose-step," but now it was faster and carried them backwards. The German audience laughed no longer and the Ketjes took flight like so many sparrows.

I lose time, perhaps, in telling you of these incidents, which give us a little respite from horror and bloodshed. Yet permit me to tell you of still another, of the truth of which I have been assured by one of my friends who himself witnessed it. The town of Bruges has for its Mayor an old gentleman, eighty years of age, the Count de Bocarmé. He is one of the *doyens* of our House of Representatives and enjoys the well-earned respect of every one. When the Germans entered Bruges, he waited for them at his post, dignified and ready for everything that might happen. The German officers questioned him brutally, with their revolvers pointed under his nose by way of argument. "Your pardon, gentlemen," said the Count, whose manners possess the charm of the old regime. "You are the stronger here. If you please, you can make me a prisoner. You can, if

you please, have me shot. But, having regard to my age and position, I insist that everything be done with civility."

Is there not to be discovered in this delicious incident the whole contrast between Kultur and that simple dignity of heart and spirit by which among yourselves and among us a civilized man is recognized?

Although free from the note of tragedy, this scene exhibits no less of the same moral quality than do the many other brave deeds which grow daily in number and which condemnations and executions only succeed in multiplying.

The Germans can make nothing of it. Listen to this, from the *Neues Stuttgarter Tagezeitung*:

"There exists in Belgium a sort of falsely conceived heroism which drives people to commit extravagant actions, in spite of the real danger to which they thereby become exposed; for instance, attempting to get to the front through the battle-lines, assisting escaped soldiers, spying, etc.

"The German authorities," the newspaper continues, "have been compelled to pronounce the severest penalties against such delinquents; but, in spite of this, in spite of the increasing number of death-sentences, it would seem that not yet has a means been discovered of impressing certain minds with fear."

Precisely! And the more tyranny asserts itself, the stronger will Belgium's resistance grow.

Endurer pour durer, "Endure that you may last."

This motto, which in the sixteenth century was that of Cardinal Granville, Archbishop of Malines, may be applied to-day to Belgium as a whole.

Neither the cruelty of an enemy without shame nor his shady tricks will get the better of this patriotic endurance. It will not end save with the liberation of our soil and the complete acknowledgment of our rights.

I have quoted—and I ask pardon for it—the language of some German wiseacre or other, some scribbler of to-day. Listen now to the words which a poet of former times has put into the mouth of oppressed Belgium :

" Liberty marches before me, her feet stained with blood, and the streaming folds of her robe soiled with blood.

" All this blood shall not have flowed in vain. Courage, brave people ! The God of Victory is your guide. As we see the ocean burst its barriers, so must the tyrant be broken and hurled down, and driven forth from the land that he has in his insolence usurped."

The poet who speaks thus to us is neither a Belgian nor a Frenchman. It is Goethe, who wrote these lines in the last scene of his fine drama, *Egmont.*

That one German, at any rate, understood us. And it is because she is all filled with those sentiments of courage and independence which Goethe has so nobly expressed that Belgium, bleeding but proud

to stand fast for the Right, shall drive forth the tyrants and the perjurers from her land, which in their insolence they are to-day usurping.

THE DUTIES OF EXILE

A Speech delivered on the 22nd of June 1915, *at the General Meeting of Belgian Groups in the Midlands, at the City Hall, Manchester.*

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

In thanking me as you have done you have reversed our positions, for it is rather I that should tell you of the lively gratitude which I owe you for the reception which I have met with at your hands, and for the good cheer which it has brought to my heart. It is well during these stimulating but painful hours through which we are passing, scattered as we are and absorbed in various forms of work for our common cause—it is well for us Belgians, I say, to see one another, to meet one another frequently, and to impregnate ourselves with that spirit of fellowship which is born of our hopes and our activities.

It is a piece of our Fatherland which I find here. In these Belgian groups which we are discovering, one after the other, some large, others very small, in England, France, Holland, Switzerland, and elsewhere, one perceives as it were the fragments of

a mirror which for a time has been smashed to bits. And each of these fragments, within its own limits, preserves for us and reflects for us the image of our whole country.

But the magnificent meeting of this evening is an unusual one in that it presents to my honourable friend Count Goblet d'Alviella and myself that image of the Fatherland framed, or rather enshrined, in the hospitality and friendship of a great and famous English city. With what pleasure we find ourselves permitted to greet and thank with all our hearts, among the leading men who have been so kind as to be with us this evening, the Lord Mayor of Manchester, so distinguished for his devotion to our cause, Sir Daniel McCabe, and the illustrious Bishop of Salford, Mgr. Casartelli, a proved friend of Belgium, whose memory the University of Louvain cherishes with a peculiar pride.

Led by these gentlemen and stimulated by their example, an entire population exhausts its ingenuity in providing for the Belgians who have sought refuge within this great industrial region all the elements and consolations of an honourable and useful life.

History tells us that during the Middle Ages the Aldermen of Bruges, when they received into their city an English king who there awhile sought shelter, addressed him in the following words: "Your Majesty cannot be unaware that the soil of Flanders is common to all men, no matter where they were

born." By a curious turn of the wheel of Destiny, we find ourselves to-day the guests of a glorious Empire, upon which the sun never sets and where we discern once more, in the reception of King George and his loyal subjects as in the policy of Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey, those traditions of faithful and generous friendship to which we have been habituated by the great statesmen of England, such as Palmerston and Gladstone.

* * *

Yes, Belgium is scattered. Yes, she is suffering unheard-of sorrows. And yet, she has never lived in the hearts of her children and in the conscience of mankind with a life more intense, more united, more shining and more noble.

But when we speak of a scattered nation, there is one sense in which we must qualify our words. Those Belgians of the inner and outer world, as they have been called, you know very well where they find their common meeting-ground, whither their thoughts run, and where our devotion must always follow them.

It is in our battle-lines ; it is in the midst of our Army, whose glorious gaps are filled each day by a stream of new recruits ; it is in that calm and pure atmosphere of courage and confidence which surrounds our soldiers, yes, every one of them, in spite of the fogs of the Yser and the clouds of the asphyxiating gas.

It is there, to that inviolate corner of our land, that we must always turn if we are to seize the true meaning of things, to stimulate our energies and to strengthen our sacred unity for the fight and for liberation.

Separated as we are from this Belgium Militant by a curtain of flame, we perceive, through the fumes of smoke and blood, Belgium the Captive. She stands there erect, like the Madonna, her breast pierced by the sword of every form of wrong : the sword of perjury, the sword of treason, the sword of massacre, the sword of pillage, the sword of baseness, the sword of slander. But, stronger than all her torments, she holds her head high and unstained, her eyes speak her serene confidence in the Eternal Justice, while with her foot she crushes the reptile that would soil her with its slime.

And here, free of the weight of the yoke, but exiled and longing for her home, we see Belgium the Wanderer, that Belgium of five or six hundred thousand refugees who have been scattered throughout the world. Their life, for the past ten months, has had also its heroisms to show, and this life entails upon those who live it certain duties, all its own, concerning which you will not, I think, be surprised if I speak to you for a few moments.

* * *

How admirable it was, when upon our little country, which in its simplicity had believed in the worth

of treaties and which had accepted as the very foundation of its national existence a sort of servitude, which, imposed upon it by the general interest, ought to have assured to it, in return for a certain abandonment of its diplomatic status, the security of that existence—when upon this little country the outrageous ultimatum of the 2nd of August burst like a thunderclap in a calm sky—how wonderful it was to see this whole nation, where party struggles were so bitter, rise like one man to the situation. In truth, I shall never forget, and not one of those who were present will ever forget, that tragic night when, in the Palace at Brussels, under the presidency of the King, we decided upon the terms of our reply to Germany. While we were leaving the Palace, the first rays of the dawn were lighting up the Park, and already from the poorer quarters of the town was rising that confused rumour which proclaims the resumption of work that has been for a while suspended. Who, I ask you, among that laborious and peaceful populace, suspected the tragedy that was preparing? How would that crowd, as much attached to its easy way of living as to its habits of free criticism, accept the news of the ultimatum and of the reply which the King's Government had given to it? How would it face the terrible consequences which that reply was about to bring upon it?

Ah! what a fine people, greater than any one amongst us had imagined! In all that crowd there

was not a moment's hesitation, nor doubt as to what duty demanded.

No one who did not witness the spectacle which Brussels presented on the 4th of August knows what the awakening of a people means. Suddenly the whole nation knew itself, and the efforts of long ago made by our ancestors against the oppression of the foreigner revived at a stroke in the enthusiasm of a patriotism the ardour of which that nation itself had never suspected.

What epic scenes were those! Early in the morning the King, in his field uniform, rode on horseback to the Parliament House. His passage was acclaimed by every voice; every arm was stretched out towards him, as if to approve and encourage his actions. Every eye burned with a deep and proud resolve.

Within the Palais de la Nation, in that Chamber which has so often echoed to our debates and our quarrels, ministers, senators, deputies, the night before still so divided, all of us suddenly perceived that we had but one mind. Grave and thoughtful, mastering their emotion, all took their places. The Queen and the young Princes were in our midst.

Through the windows of the Palace, which open upon the Square, came to our ears the waves of cheering which accompanied the progress of the King. We heard them grow nearer and louder. And when the King entered the room, spontaneously our common soul broke out, in its turn, into an enthusiastic ovation.

Then the King spoke, in a clear, grave voice, the voice of a leader of men. He spoke of our duty and our rights. He counselled a calm but steadfast courage and the close union of all the Belgian people. He reminded us of the deeds of our fathers of 1830. He praised the Army and the enthusiasm of the young men who, at that very moment, were crowding in their thousands into the recruiting depots. He took God to witness that our cause was just. He asked the representatives of the nation if the nation was ready, as he himself was ready, for every effort, for every sacrifice, in the defence of the sacred heritage of independence. Who shall tell the beauty of the oath in which those men—and not one of them could cherish the smallest illusion with regard to the weakness of our arms when confronted by the most formidable military organization in the world—echoed the oath of their King! Who shall tell the sacred emotion which thrilled us all at once to the core of our beings, when at a quarter to eleven Baron de Broqueville, ascending the tribune, announced, without a word of comment, "Gentlemen, I regret to inform the Chamber that the frontier has been crossed"! Who shall tell the splendour of those war measures—improvised laws—which were discussed, drawn up, voted hastily but calmly, while already in the districts of Verviers and Herve the brutal gallop of the Uhlans was scattering behind the hoofs of their horses all those liberties which we had worshipped and kept safe!

After that day, while our Army pursued its superhuman task; while before Liége it confronted the German Colossus, and while during five days the resistance of the forts of Liége kept him in check and defeated all his schemes; while at Eghezée and Haelen and Diest it defended our soil, foot by foot; while it risked itself in daring sorties from Antwerp and thus collaborated in the victory of the Marne—after that day, all along the highways of our country, behind the Army and upon its flanks, was seen streaming through the fields, where the crops still stood unharvested, the endless exodus of those townspeople and villagers who had been hunted from their homes. To see them pass by in their long lines was to see once again the pictures of Laermans: poor souls, whose sullen faces reflected their visions of blood and fire, carrying on their backs a few wretched bundles, dragging their broken boots along the stones of the roads, leading by the hand weeping children or pressing to their breasts babies that slept. But all, in those hours of utter bewilderment, and since then in their exile, where we find them again to-day, suffer their lot without complaint, because they know themselves to be without reproach. And there is not one amongst them, no matter how wretched he may be, who, thinking of the noble ideal for which he is suffering, is not ready to say with the poet:

Je le ferais encore si j'avais à le faire.

Without doubt they are suffering, these poor souls, just as we are, whose families have been decimated and scattered, whose homes have been burned or pillaged. But—let us admit it—there is in our suffering a kind of bitter luxury in being able to oppose to the brutalities of a dishonoured foe the calm resistance of a conscience that has no remorse, to refuse to falsehood the power to masquerade as truth, or to usurpation the right to legitimize offences against the moral freedom of the human race.

Right is greater than Might. This is the lesson which our beloved land teaches to all the world, and which, if we will, shall assure to her, at the same time, that immortal prestige which is ours to-day and all the material reparation and compensations which victory will bring.

If we will. That is to say, if we continue to do our whole duty, all of us, each in his own station, soldiers and civilians, men and women, Belgians who have stayed at home and Belgians who have escaped into exile.

Success depends not only upon military operations. It will depend also upon the behaviour of all our citizens, yes, of every one of them, no matter how modest his station may be.

" But what can we do in exile ? " I am asked now and then. Before all else, we can remain worthy of our cause. You are proud of being Belgians. See to it that Belgium shall be proud of you ! Do

nothing that may lessen the moral value of our participation in the war.

The union of all around our King and those who bear the responsibility of directing, at his side, the destinies of the country—this I need not recommend to you. It exists in every Belgian heart.

But I say this to you all: To work! Let all those who can, serve in the ranks of the Army. Let all the rest help our soldiers. Let no single talent remain buried.

To you who have hands, I say: Prepare before all else food, clothing, and munitions. It is by the thousands of tons that the armies of to-day call for shells. There is, than this, no work more urgent after that of our soldiers, of which it is the condition precedent and which it alone can prolong.

To you who have leisure, I say: Replace those who are fighting, not to supplant them, but to take their places in the work whose interruption may endanger the nation's life.

To you who have money—if there are any such among the Belgians—I say: Bring to the Treasury the sinews of war.

To you who have science, I say: Bring to the fight the benefit of your discoveries and your inventions.

To you women, I say: Nurse and heal our wounded, sew, knit, mend.

To you priests, I say: Console those who mourn, raise up those who fail in the struggle.

To you who can speak and write, I say: Spread everywhere the truth, explain the causes of our conduct and of our confidence, repel slander, stimulate courage.

When she became aware of the indignation aroused in every honourable heart by her violation of that Belgian neutrality which she had sworn to protect, understanding that she had been guilty not only of a crime but of a blunder also, Germany sought to mislead public opinion.

In order to seem white himself, Cain attempted to blacken Abel. One of the fathers of German Kultur, Frederick II, once said: "Whatever I do, I shall find a pedant to justify me." Wilhelm II has found ninety-three of them. They have signed, if they did not draw it up, that truly colossal document, the Manifesto of the Intellectuals. Since then, with an obstinacy which nothing can abash, the agents and sub-agents of the German propaganda have exerted themselves, in the most serious fashion, to make us believe that Belgium, previous to the German manifesto, had failed in the duties which her neutrality imposed upon her.

Listen, for instance, to what Dr. Dernburg had the audacity to write in the newspapers of America: "In so far as the conquest of Belgium is concerned, it has been won by the blood of Germans, and that country can never be restored so long as it shall be under the political control of England."

Assuredly these German reptiles know well that

Belgium, who, before the war, was the friend of all the Powers, was neither the vassal nor the ally of any one of them. They know with what jealous care the Belgian Government watched over its duties as a neutral, and this to such a degree that on the 2nd of August 1914, a few hours before the delivery of the German ultimatum, it caused a Brussels newspaper to be seized because it had printed in the margin of one of its numbers : " Long live France ! Down with the German Barbarian ! " Those who prepared that ultimatum, Herr von Bethmann Hollweg and Herr von Jagow, were forced themselves to admit our complete loyalty. Even up to the night of the 3rd of August, of the four advance-guard divisions of the Belgian Army, but one confronted Germany. The others watched our frontiers to the south and along the sea coast. By publishing the diplomatic documents which they stole from the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Brussels, the Germans have succeeded in proving that we had but one anxiety—that we should remain just as independent of England and France as of Germany. Of all these documents, that which they have most craftily exploited, after having begun by mutilating its text, is a note of General Ducarne, Chief of the Belgian Staff, concerning an interview which he had in 1906 with Lieutenant-Colonel Barnardiston, English Military Attaché. Well, what did this note say ? It showed that the Belgian Staff, without otherwise taking any step or coming to any decision,

had listened to the English Attaché's exposition of a vague sketch of the proposed eventual assistance which England, in her capacity of guarantor, might send to Belgium "Might send." And when? Under what conditions? The note stated it clearly: "After the violation of our neutrality by Germany." And the pharisees of Kultur tore their clothing and cried: "What need of witnesses! Belgium has uttered blasphemy! It is she who has violated her own neutrality!" It is not without humour that Lloyd George has compared this language of Germany to that of a footpad who, having assassinated a peaceful citizen, should thereupon display, in justification of his crime, a letter found upon the body of his victim in which that person stated his intention of appealing to the police in case he should be assaulted. It is precisely the same case. And Germany assuredly knows it. But her stubborn energy exerts itself in striving to make the world believe the contrary, so that the opinion of neutral countries may be led astray. It is in her methods of propaganda, no less than in her methods of war, that this unscrupulous Power seems to show her anxiety to justify more and more the severe judgment which Lord Curzon has passed upon her by calling her "the Mad Dog of Europe." As for us, we shall never weary of opposing to this stream of poisonous slime and bloody froth all the simplicity, purity and beauty of a Belgium who has always remained faithful to her duty. We have paid dearly

enough for that fidelity, thank God! not to allow a reputation for honesty which we value above all else to be undermined.

* * *

Another useful way, gentlemen, of employing our time is to take thought for the morrow by preparing for the material re-establishment of our country.

We were surprised by the war. Let us not be surprised by peace.

Belgium is an ant-hill. The boot of the Barbarian has overturned it. It is ours to build it up again. And for this it will not be enough to have a number of particular and selfish projects. What is wanted is a general programme. It will not be enough to have our individual goodwills. We must have Will.

And you will not be surprised if, in a city wherein economic considerations bulk so largely, I consider, for a short while, the consequences of the war from this point of view. The industrial effort of the German Empire had attained of recent years, in spite of frequent crises, astounding proportions. This country, which in 1870 counted scarcely forty millions of inhabitants, sufficed in 1905 for the needs of sixty millions. Hamburg had caught up Liverpool, outstripped Antwerp and Rotterdam, and had left Marseilles and Genoa far behind. The figure of exports, which in 1890 was less than nine milliards of francs, had bounded to fourteen milliards in twelve years. The German banks and steamship companies

spread their network over the entire world. German colonists and commercial travellers flooded the ends of the earth, and notably South America. After having set foot firmly in Africa, Germany had strengthened her position in the Pacific by the acquisition of the Carolines and the Mariannes. Established at Chan-Tung, she awaited her moment for stretching out her hand upon China. Turkey she had brought into a sort of vassalage to herself, and the Sultan had conceded to her, before the war, the railways of Konia–Bagdad–Bassorah, which were to open to her and place in her power the marvellous plain of Mesopotamia.

This favourable situation Germany owed in great part to her customs treaties. By forcing the vanquished, through its famous Article II, to concede the clause of the most favoured nation, the Treaty of Frankfort of the 10th of May 1871 had led France little by little to the adoption of a Protectionist policy, whose repercussion could not but affect in Germany's favour the markets of the other nations. And thus it came about that customs tariffs and surcharges raised a veritable wall between us and our southern neighbours.

Later, from Russia, in compensation for her neutrality during the Japanese War, Germany had obtained a preferential tariff. Dare I, in this City Hall of Manchester, add that she owned to finding some profit also in English Free Trade? Finally, we observe more and more clearly visible her design to

draw Austria-Hungary within the bounds of a vast centralized Customs Union, which again should develop for her all the advantages of a privileged situation. She would also further increase her interior trade in order the better to export her surplus products at an insignificant price.

In order to put a check upon these boundless ambitions, the programme which we shall have to conceive in common will include no doubt measures both temporary and permanent.

When the war is over, Belgium, the North of France and Poland will have seen many of their factories destroyed, many of them, at least, robbed of their machinery and of their stocks of raw material. Time will be required to renew these stocks, to procure new machinery, and to repair the buildings. Many months, years perhaps, must pass in this way before those factories recover their former activity. On the other hand, the German factories will remain uninjured, since, even if the Allies should penetrate into the heart of Germany, they will not practise the official pillage which our enemies know so well how to organize. While many of our workers must remain paralysed, all the German workshops will stand from day to day ready to recommence operations. Freed of certain among their rivals, they will meet even with increased facilities. They will again make of us their tributaries, and will again impose their goods upon the remotest markets. Germany, conquered, will thus procure for herself

an instant revenge, while awaiting the moment when her recovery of her conquests in the commerce of the world and the reawakening of her pride, that for a moment has been subdued, provoke within fifteen or twenty years a renewal of the bloody struggle.

This would be monstrous. It is not to be thought of that criminals should enrich themselves at the cost of their victims. In order to ensure peace for the future, it is vital that, so soon as the storm shall have passed by, all the peoples who have bowed beneath it shall quickly recover their normal existence. To this indemnities will contribute.

But independently of this immediate anxiety, by what efforts may we hope definitely to establish that economic balance which will be an essential factor in the continuance of peace ?

Must not such efforts take their inspiration from that same sacred understanding which to-day has associated against Prussian Militarism all these nations whose economic capacities are so different, but who will find in the very variety of their aptitudes a greater ease in co-ordinating their activities ?

No one deceives himself into supposing that the German nation, even if it is brought to the dust, will not begin again to work, to produce and to sell. No one can reasonably dream of organizing against Germany any lasting boycott. But to prevent her from taking a revenge of commercial diplomacy upon

her too confident conquerors, would it not be well, without affecting in any way the sovereignty of any Allied State, to compare the conditions of manufacture which exist in each one of them, to determine the part which each shall assume in the future economic and maritime efforts and to reserve to each the corresponding advantages? Will it not be possible for each more largely to open to its Allies its outlets, its markets and its contracts? Will not commercial treaties and arrangements between the Allies with regard to legislation, transport, postal communication and exchange be both possible and valuable? Can we not, in a word, realize the combinations necessary to surround the business men of the friendly nations with better conditions in so far as their competition with an unscrupulous enemy is concerned?

Let our scientific men and our men of affairs, whether they have remained in Belgium or taken refuge in foreign countries, study from now onwards these problems of reparation, policy and defence. The economic enquiry which the Belgian Government has instituted will make such a task easier for them.

Shall I add, for them and for all of us, that they will find in their exile a duty as well as a reward in taking cognizance not only of the qualities of initiative, loyalty and sanity which characterize the Anglo-Saxon race, but also of the warlike virtues of that race, so slow to move, but so jealous of its

liberties, and so faithful to its engagements, and which is endowed, like Endymion, one of Disraeli's heroes, with so marvellous a "pluck," a courage so stubborn and a capacity to wait so prodigious.

A capacity to wait! Let us not deceive ourselves about that.

In the present war, so different from those of other days, it is not likely that either of the rival coalitions will, in any short time, force the end in its own favour by one of those military strokes which, at a blow, beat the enemy to the earth. The forces that are opposed are too formidable, and the extent of territory over which about fifteen millions of men face one another is too great, for us to be able to look, perhaps for a very long time, for that decisive military success which, by itself, shall still the hurricane. It would seem much more likely that it will be by a slow process, continuous and methodical, that weakness will overtake and attrition undermine, little by little, the system of military, naval, economic and financial forces against which the Allies are fighting, until the huge mass ends by tottering to its fall.

It is for this reason that we have need of a strong will, calm and indomitable, always equal to itself, to carry on the struggle so long as it shall be necessary. And this tenacity, which our military leaders and our soldiers understand so well, is no less necessary for each of the non-

combatants, since it is the sum of all its individual wills which makes the moral force of a nation.

And it is for this reason that each one of us must militarize his resolve.

* * *

An Italian statesman, Signor Barzilaï, lately published, in a form whose humour cannot disguise its wisdom, what he called *The Commandments of the Civilian*. The words which stood at the head of this little work were those which should inspire our General Staffs: Effort, Confidence, Patience.

Patience for the wives and the anxious, weeping mothers who know nothing, who long, yet are almost afraid to know.

Patience for the girls, sighing at their needlework.

Patience for the children who see the tear starting to the eye, to whom one says nothing, yet who divine everything.

Patience for all those who write letters that are never answered.

Patience for the men who have been torn up by their roots and are pulled here and there by contrary duties. Patience for those who are tormented by the ambitions of politics or the itch to criticize.

Patience for those who say too much and reflect not enough.

Patience for those whom the length of the trial offends, for those who by the seeming futility of the military reports are wearied, for those whose

courage falters beneath the breath of a hasty or selfish speech.

And patience for all those who would have Peace.

Here and there, of recent months, voices have been raised which speak of peace, and in many of these it is possible for an experienced ear to recognize the Teutonic accent. It is not at the moment when the burglar is about to be thrown out of the house where he has committed his crime that it is proper to talk of peace. The agents of peace, in such a case are the " policemen," that is to say, the good soldiers of the Belgian and Allied armies.

It has been said of genius that it is no more than a long patience. In the titanic conflict of to-day, we may say the same thing of success. He who first loses patience will be the vanquished. But the final result will be that which the most optimistic of us desire, if we all, civilians and soldiers alike, know how to keep our endurance and to do, each in his own sphere, be it great or small, his duty.

A few weeks ago I found myself at Poperinghe. An epidemic of typhoid fever, which to-day has fortunately been stamped out, was ravaging the population of this Flemish canton, so close to unhappy Ypres. A hospital had been improvised there to nurse the sick. During my visit I was taken into an attic where upon a poor truckle-bed lay a young nun. While nursing the sick, and in spite of all precautions which she had taken, she had been bitten in the finger by a delirious patient.

Her arm, infected by the poison, was nothing but a monstrous mass of flesh covered with sores. They had meditated amputation, but already it had been considered to be too late for it. As I congratulated her, and told her that she deserved our admiration just as much as our soldiers who, but a short distance away, were setting out for the trenches, she replied, with a smile upon her young, angelic face, where already there hovered a threatening shadow: "One does what one can, Monsieur le Ministre, doesn't one?"

If each of us did truly what he could, I do not say that victory and reparation would be near. Perhaps we shall have to struggle and suffer for a long time still. But I say that they are certain.

Armed with a courage and a patience that will never weaken, confident in the loyalty of our noble Allies, let us await our destiny with a serene faith. The hour moves onwards slowly upon the dial of Justice. But it moves surely. As it is written in the ninety-first Psalm: "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eye shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked."

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRENCHES

On the 11th of March 1916, in the great amphitheatre of the Sorbonne, under the presidency of M. Paul Deschanel, President of the Chamber of Deputies,

and in the presence of the President of the Republic, the Ambassadors and Ministers of the friendly and Allied Powers, and of the representatives of all the Public Offices, the *Alliance Franco-Belge* held an important demonstration in honour of Belgium.

On the platform round M. Deschanel were seated : M. Denys Cochin, Minister of State ; M. Justin Godard, Under-Secretary of State ; M. Carton de Wiart, Minister of Justice ; Baron Beyens, Minister for Foreign Affairs ; MM. Vandervelde, Minister of State ; Barthou, Deputy and formerly President of the Council ; Steeg, Senator, formerly Minister, and President of the *Alliance Franco-Belge* ; Klobukowski, Minister of France at Brussels ; Baron Guillaume, Minister of Belgium at Paris ; Delanney, Prefect of the Seine ; Mithouard, President of the Municipal Council of Paris ; and Laurent, Prefect of Police.

To the speeches of the President of the Chamber of Deputies and of the President of the *Alliance Franco-Belge*, M. Carton de Wiart replied in the following address :

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

Our first words must be words of thanks. It is our duty. It is also our greatest desire.

On that sad evening in October 1914 when the Belgian Government and its fortunes came to land at Havre-de-Grâce, the President of the French Republic responded in these words to the respectful

sentiments which I had the honour to address to him on behalf of my colleagues :

" We were, in virtue of treaties into which we had entered, guarantors of the neutrality of Belgium, and we are not of those who disavow their signatures. But the heroism of your nation and the blood which we have shed in common have made our duty still more sacred, and we will fulfil it to the end with all the warmth of a brotherly friendship."

A brotherly friendship ! How we experience it, how we feel it ! How we see it all around us !

From the head of the State and Government of the Republic it has spread to France in her entirety. Growing as our sacrifices have grown, it exhausts itself in the service of our soldiers, our refugees and our captive compatriots, in the exertion of an ingenious generosity, of which the *Alliance Franco-Belge*, under the devoted and unwearied leadership of M. Steeg, presents one of the most stimulating aspects.

It is this and this alone which explains that apparently paradoxical phenomenon which has existed since October 1914, and of which the history of International Law knows no example : a State enshrined, as it were, in the territory of another State ; a Government which continues to direct, from the land in which it has found an asylum and a shelter, the whole pathetic existence of a nation that is defending itself ; a legitimate authority ensuring from outside the unity of will and hope among seven million Belgians, some with the colours,

others prisoners of the enemy, others scattered throughout the world, watching over the interests of each one of these people, defeating all hostile manœuvres, preparing for the restoration of a country that lies in ruins—and all this without its full independence and its complete sovereignty having ever had to encounter so much as the suspicion of a hindrance.

This brotherly friendship was solemnly affirmed, hardly a month ago, by the *Déclaration de Sainte-Adresse*, which honours at the same time France and the other Allied Powers—England, Russia, Italy and Japan. And now here at this moment it is expressed in the reception which we have been given by this imposing assembly, wherein the visage of France is, as it were, reflected. And finally it is this friendship which has wished—and for my part I find myself strangely embarrassed by it—that our Belgian voices should be associated in the Sorbonne with certain of those voices of which the oratory and letters of France are so justly proud, with those of the statesmen whom before the war we admired for their far-seeing patriotism—friends of peace, but still more of the country's honour. Since the war began we see their energies and influence employed each day upon the disciplining of the public spirit and contributing thus to the strengthening of that armour of courage and tenacity which, in the eyes of the world, makes France to-day fairer than she has ever been before.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us have no doubt about it. These friendly voices which have been raised and have answered one another beneath this echoing vault, and the approval which your sympathy extended towards them, will have an effect that will travel far and beneficially. Their echoes will be carried among all the scattered groups of Belgium Dispersed. It will sound in the ears of Belgium in Arms. Three hundred kilometres away, in our trenches by the Yser, it will carry our affectionate greeting to our dear soldiers—always so far from their own friends, always so near to death—whose endurance and energy are at this very moment stimulated and exalted by the exploits of your soldiers at Verdun, to whom now I offer the expression of our boundless admiration.

But this echo will be heard farther still. It will cross the battle-lines. Beyond the trenches, across the zone of flame and of blood, it will travel even so far as that invaded Belgium which our tender love calls up before us each day under the image of a mother, captive and outraged.

She is listening; never doubt it. Every ear is stretched, quivering, to hear what the wind from France shall bring. I know the joy which our brothers in the invaded territory, your compatriots and ours—for their fortunes are united there as are ours here—feel when, filtering through the lies by which the unscrupulous foe seeks to stupefy and deceive them, come the sound and the

meaning of voices which they love, to assure them that our confidence, our unity and our courage are the equal of their courage, their unity and their confidence. I know, too, with what gladness their eyes, searching the western horizon, mark along it the coming of our scouting aeroplanes and see, floating above their desolate cities, the two tricolours, yours and ours, like the promise of a quick deliverance. And the throb of those motors in the sky echoes in their hearts like the very heartbeats of our free country.

Ah! let us not hide ourselves from those eyes over yonder. Let us not distrust those ears. And since you have to-day placed this platform at the service of the Belgian Government, permit me, in its name, to say to the Belgians who are in captivity how loyal is its anxiety for them and how warm is its admiration. I say it to all: to those Members of Parliament, to those Mayors, those Aldermen, whose proud hearts day by day confront fines, imprisonment and deportation—to those magistrates who have stayed at their posts and have never ceased to administer justice, in full independence, in the name of the King of the Belgians—to that Bar which never bends its neck—to that Clergy whose patriotism and courage are worthy (and to say this is to say all) of our great Cardinal of Malines—to those professors who, deaf to all clumsy attempts at seduction, refuse to open their lecture-rooms, scorning to serve a science that is enslaved.

And how can I fail to seize this occasion, when I stand in this place, this ancient and venerable Sorbonne, which has always been as it were the brain of France, of paying my tribute to that University of Louvain, younger sister of the University of Paris—a younger sister, already aged but little less than five centuries of a lofty and noble civilization, and martyred to-day by a race which imagines itself to be learned! Permit me here to salute those many stout patriots who daily risk their lives in their endeavours to join our Army and to take their place in its ranks. Let us also salute those men of business, manufacturers and merchants, who face ruin uncomplainingly, nay more, openly rejoice at each new fall in the value of the mark. "Yet," says the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, candidly enough, while it waxes wroth over these manifestations of pleasure—"Yet they ought to wish the mark to retain all its value, since it is in marks that all payments are made to them." Let us salute those workmen who, sooner than set their hands to work from which the enemy might profit, refuse high wages and suffer hunger. A day came when, irritated by this resistance, the tyrant dragged them one by one from their wives and children and threw them into railway trucks to be deported into the centre of Germany. And as the train carried them away, they sang to cheer their weeping families, they sang in the teeth of their savage gaolers, the Brabançonne and the Marseillaise. Ah, the brave fellows! All are of

one mind, rich and poor, men and women, clergy and laymen, Flemings and Walloons; for the same sufferings and the same resistance to the same enemy have made still more intimate the interpenetration of these two Belgian groups, whose courage and rights are one, and whose union is the basis of our very nationality.

When a hive all humming with industrious activity—such as was Belgium before the war—is suddenly attacked by an enemy, however formidable, instantly the bees abandon their work upon their wax and honey. With every sting thrust out, they rush together against the enemy, their Queen in the front rank. In the same way, at the moment of invasion, our national community drew itself together around its leader.

With what courage our young Army faced, upon the heights of Liége, the best trained, the best equipped, the most formidable host that the world has seen; with what tireless ardour it defended, step by step, the national soil against the barbarian invasion and victoriously arrested it upon the banks of Yser, others have told and will tell. For my part, I beg the friends of Belgium never to distinguish, in that sympathy and gratitude which they so generously offer to us, between the courage of our people and that of our soldiers. The line of trenches which forbids them to live together does not prevent them from thinking alike. And when we think of it, is it not, upon that side as upon this, really the

same form of courage, that new courage—revealed by this war—which gains in depth and moral beauty all that it loses in prestige and fame? One may express it in one word: "Steadfastness." Whether we are "steadfast" here, as are our soldiers, fixed as it were forever in one spot, surrounded by fog, mud and ruins, exposed each moment to fumes and gases which poison each mouthful of the air they breathe, to bullets, shrapnel, bombs, grenades, and the shells which tear them to pieces or crush them to powder —or whether we are "steadfast" there, as are our friends in the invaded districts, ignorant of all that is going on, out of touch with all the world, exposed to all the wiles, the cruelties and the falsehoods of a shameless foe, menaced each day with starvation, arrest, deportation and execution—is it not largely the same silent form of duty? The great deeds and the fine words, the rattle of sword-blades, the frenzy of the charge, the theatrical intoxication of glory, all these are of small account here. This courage is nameless. Most commonly we know nothing of it, and it knows nothing of itself. What is its business? Never to flinch, to keep, through everything, its coolness and its confidence, to preserve—even unto the death—the freedom of its intelligence and of its will.

Well, even as they are steadfast in our trenches while they wait for the day, so ardently desired, when we shall overthrow and hurl back the detested foe, so are they steadfast in all our

towns and all our villages, from the bogs of our Ardennes to the coal-beds of our Borinage, and the sands of our Campine, and the polders of our Flanders.

Everywhere breathes the same patriotism: at Liége, that Chevalière of the Legion of Honour, to whom the waves of the Meuse bring, like the continuation of her own resistance and a promise of her speedy liberation, the sound of the heroic defence of Verdun; at Brussels, where the statue of the Archangel Michael, on the summit of her Hôtel de Ville, points to the sky with his shining sword and symbolizes the eternal triumph of Truth over Pride; at Bruges, whose glorious belfry, slowly born out of this ancient earth, where art, freedom and solid toil have ever dwelt, reminds our uneasy tyrants that our people may have at times been conquered, but subdued—never!

Nor does the enemy deceive himself. Though he has betrayed the little country that he had sworn to protect, though he has delivered her over, in his cowardice, to fire and the sword, the only gain which will remain to him will be the ineffaceable shame of his perjury and his barbarism. And to-day—even before our arms and the victory of the Powers who are allied in the service of the Right have ensured to us the reparation which we await—if we have to choose between this little martyred land and the great Empire of Germany, which, I ask you, is the nation whose stature in the eyes

of the world and of History has been increased by this war?

The illustrious citizen of France who presides over us to-day, and who, after having done us the honour to be born amongst us, has always done us the kindness to remember the circumstance, said last year in this very place:

"Belgium is not only the stake of this struggle, but the pledge of Universal Justice."

It is precisely that. And let me add that to France belongs the glory of being the guarantor.

Faithful to her destiny, France—France, with her sword held high, loyalty glowing in her eyes, proud and resolute as in the first day of the war—France is to-day the true incarnation of the rights of every man, of the freedom of all of us, nations as well as individuals—that freedom which is now on its defence against the most formidable irruption of barbarism that the world has seen.

Nothing, unless it be the courage of our allied armies, to-day gives greater strength to our hopes.

For the Right does not die, and if its flame may for a moment tremble, it is only to shine presently for the world with a new glory upon the horizon.

Whether he puts faith in the unlimited progress of Humanity or in its providential destiny, the thinking man cannot allow such a reversal of the moral law as that implied in a world in which everything that makes life worth living—the true, the beautiful

and the good—must give place to the stifling fumes of a Kultur which recognizes no rights against crime.

When Justice beholds some of the effects of this pestilence, her reason revolts and her heart is heavy. She suffers under the insolent violation of promises, from the destruction of so many lives and so much beauty, from the spectacle of Science transformed into the servant of Death :

Souffre, ô cœur gros de haine, affamé de justice.

Suffer, or rather, struggle ! Struggle onwards in the joy of your ideal ! Let your hate grow tenfold stronger. Let your love of the Right unite for victory all the energies of your will !

A nation drunk with pride, but already yielding under a dull anguish, fears not to associate the name of God with the most cynical scorn of innocence.

But our civilization is no longer, and will never again become, the monstrous imposture of Baal or of Moloch. It is the daughter of Him who said upon the Mount :

" Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

UNION AROUND THE KING

A speech delivered on the 19th of November 1916, at the Trocadéro in Paris, on the occasion of the celebration of the name-days of the King and Queen of the Belgians.

MESSIEURS LES MINISTRES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

He who is honoured with the task of addressing a great assembly, the members of which are unknown to him and have been brought together from every quarter of the compass, who belong to the most various sections of society and are possessed by many and various opinions and convictions—such a man discovers a certain difficulty in grasping and analysing the corporate thought of his audience. Most commonly he does well to explore for a while this unknown land in order to seek for and find, beneath the confused strata of the surface, the solid, the virgin rock upon which he may set his foot firmly while he carries his design into execution.

As far as this splendid meeting of to-day is concerned, it is not so, and one feels here, at once, how vain all such probing of the surface, all such oratorical preliminaries, must be.

The thought which has brought you here together broods, as it were, over this throng. It is to me as if I saw it vibrating in the air which surrounds

us, reflected from every face and shining in every eye in this vast and crowded building. Already it has been expressed in the speech of the President of the *Association générale Belge*. As for me, a Minister of King Albert, my task will be at the same time a simple and a pleasant one, namely, to draw it into myself and to allow it for a moment to speak aloud, just as it comes to me from your thoughts and hearts.

* * *

This thought which we all share, you know that outside this building it is no less dear to the French of Paris and elsewhere. You know how, passing even beyond the wide circle of the nations of the Great Entente, it extends, I dare to say it, even to the boundaries of the civilized world. But you will all understand that on this day that is so full of memories and of hope, when we are celebrating the festivals of St. Albert and St. Elizabeth, the thought of their beloved Sovereigns fills with a still livelier enthusiasm, and brings even more close together, the Belgians present here to-day and all their fellow-countrymen: the Belgians who are in exile, the Belgians who are in the Army, and the Belgians who have remained in the invaded territory.

The Belgians who are in exile! No matter with what attentive, tactful, and generous a friendship our Allies or the neutral countries entertain them and comfort their sorrows—and God knows in how

full a measure France has contributed to their assistance !—they are still "refugees." Men and women, old people and children, they eat the bitter bread of suffering. They sigh, through nights of pain, after the brighter dawn that is to come. Their hearts, torn by privation, ruin and loss, remain fixed upon the dear beings who have stayed behind, upon their homes, their old habits of life, the interests that are threatened or have been destroyed.

Perhaps at times the temptation assails them to complain. But then—what is it which arrests the complaint upon their lips? What but the very thought which to-day dominates us all!

They think of their young Sovereigns, who have abandoned all the splendour and joy of existence, and who are watching over there, on their Flemish dune, in a modest cottage exposed to all the gales of the North Sea and close to the line of battle.

They think of that King who recks nothing of his own glory, who lives only for his daily duty as a soldier, with all its perils, and for his daily duty as a leader, with all its cares.

They think of that Queen who shares his cares and his dangers, and whose great heart, which sorrow has pierced only to enlarge it, is ever to be found by the bedside of wounded men and abandoned children.

Glorious examples of self-sacrifice and nobility, of knightly honour and moral splendour!

And so—*regis ad exemplar*—he who was about to give way, stands firm. He understands what he too owes to his country, and that he may not allow weariness to get the better for a moment of his endurance.

And if it should happen to him to have still more cruel sacrifices to make, he will say, as a Belgian manufacturer wrote to me lately—he was a refugee in France and his son had just been killed in the trenches : " My son is dead. Long live the King ! "

And our soldiers ! You can imagine, even if you do not know, how this common thought which moves us here strives ceaselessly in their minds.

As he was leaving Brussels on the 5th of August 1914, to place himself at their head, the King issued to them a famous proclamation :

Remember (he said to them) *that you are fighting for liberty and for your threatened homes. Remember, Flemings, the Battle of the Golden Spurs. And you, Walloons of Liége, who are at this moment in the post of honour, remember the six hundred Franchimontois.*

It is strange, is it not ? that twice since that day the advance of the enemy has been shattered by the Belgian Army, in two memorable encounters the result of which was perhaps decisive for the fate of our arms and of our great Allies.

Well, the first of these took place on Walloon soil, at Liége, and close to that Plateau of Sainte-

Walburge where, in 1468, the heroism of the Franchimontois, summoned to his aid by their monarch, opposed itself to the might of a traitor king.

On the second occasion it was in Flanders, on the Yser, but two cannon-shot from the famous marsh where in 1302 the men of the communes, on the day of the Golden Spurs, stopped and broke the fury of a foreign invasion.

On the first day, in front of Liége, obedient to the call of their King, our little soldiers confronted, alone, forces of the enemy five times greater than themselves, and those the picked troops of the Empire. They checked them and held them, and laid low 42,700 Germans.

General Leman commanded this heroic defence —which the world watched with breathless suspense. On the 6th of August he was established in the fort of Loncin. There he held out until the 15th. On that day, bombarded by 420-c.m. shells, the fort was completely destroyed by the explosion of a magazine, and General Leman, whom the gas had asphyxiated, was carried out from among the ruins unconscious. Next day, he wrote to the King this letter, whose beauty is surely worthy of antiquity:

"SIRE,

"You will learn with sorrow that the fort of Loncin was blown up yesterday at about 5.20 p.m., burying under its ruins the greater part, perhaps four-fifths, of its garrison.

" This explosion was the result of the fire of an artillery of extraordinary power, after a violent bombardment. The fort was far from being built to resist such formidable methods of destruction.

" I am certain that I have preserved stainless the honour of our arms. I have yielded neither the fortress nor its forts.

" Deign, Sire, to pardon the faults of this letter. I am physically prostrated by the explosion at Loncin. I would gladly have given my life could I have served you better, but Death has not been willing to accept me.

" In Germany, whither I am bound, my thoughts will always be what they have always been : Belgium and her King."

Two months went by. Two months of endless and sanguinary fighting, wherein our little Army, hemmed in and harassed by innumerable foes, defended step by step the soil of the homeland.

Only a few days ago, at the Sorbonne, M. Louis Marin, Deputy for Nancy, narrated with equal precision and eloquence our military history of those two months : the resistance on the Gette, the daring and opportune sorties from Antwerp, the defence of that fortress, where the enemy confidently expected to crush our Army and which our Army abandoned only at the last moment and empty as an old glove. Then " the race to the sea " : the German Staff hoped to compensate itself for its

defeat upon the Marne by seizing Calais, the key of England. At this moment the left wing of the French was still far away. Our men arrived upon the Yser, wearied and careworn by two long months of fighting, suffering and loss. "Hold fast for forty-eight hours on the Yser," King Albert was asked by the French High Command. And King Albert addressed to his men on the 13th of October a proclamation in which he says:

Soldiers!

See, in the positions where I am placing you, that your eyes look only forwards, and hold him a traitor to his country who shall pronounce the word "retreat" unless the formal order has been given!

And so, seeing their Soldier-king on foot at their head, proudly established upon this inviolate corner of the country's soil, firmly resolved not to abandon a hand's-breadth of it, they understood. And for all their fatigue, their cares and their sufferings, in spite of the rain and the mud, the shells and the machine guns, they stood up to seven divisions of the German Army, which moved upon them from the north and the east, supported by four hundred pieces of artillery. Admirably led by Ronarch', Meiser and Jacques, they made many a bloody gap in the advancing lines of Germans. They were called on to hold the Yser for two days. At the end of a fortnight they held it still. At this moment

the division of Grossetti arrived and the inundations completed the work of defence. Out of 48,000 infantry which we had been able to put into the line we had lost 14,000. The survivors—I saw them at the time, their eyes glowing but their faces drawn with their effort, all drenched with the rain and literally clothed in mud—the survivors, I say, were themselves astonished that they had succeeded. What was it that had stimulated them to their deed? The King's example.

This common thought which is at the same time ours, that of our refugees, and that of our soldiers, is also that of our wounded. The same comforting image which hovers over our trenches appears also in those tragic shrines of pain and devotion—our ambulances and hospitals.

My official position causes me, since the war broke out, to receive from time to time, in order later on to forward them to families which have remained in the occupied territory, the last letters and the wills of those among our soldiers who have felt themselves dying. Ah! those admirable "scraps of paper," scrawled often in a writing which hesitates and trembles, spotted often with a tear or a drop of blood. The style and handwriting of them may be uneducated. They are not the less fine.

Here, word for word, is the farewell of a young non-commissioned officer, a Fleming, wounded in eighteen places, and dead in one of our hospitals at the front:

"DEAR PARENTS AND BELOVED BROTHERS AND SISTERS,—

"When this letter is handed to you, I shall be in Heaven among the dead heroes of the war, for my conduct on the field of battle. I have died for Justice! Long live King Albert and Queen Elizabeth! Long live Belgium and her people!

"I embrace you with all my heart."

And here is another and a no less beautiful "scrap of paper."

It is dated only a few days ago, and came to me from that invaded country, our Mater Dolorosa, to which we are attached by the "immobility of tombs and the movement of cradles."

This letter brings to us the echo of our common thought, and as we read it we can see something of the warmth and unity of the patriotism and loyalty which, yonder, sustain our brothers in their chains and their enforced silence, and we feel how mystical a breath must pass, on such an anniversary as this, over the whole martyred land.

At this very moment, as you know, the invader, outdoing all his former crimes, is proceeding with the methodical deportation of our workmen. Dragged from their homes, they are invited to sign I know not what agreement to work for the German, a proposal which they refuse. And while the trains carry them away eastwards, in cattle-trucks, our people, held back at the point of the bayonet, hear them, as they pass, singing our national airs. And

as they go by they throw out notes like this that I am about to read to you.

And will you tell me if our Sovereigns could hope, for their fête, for a more moving form of homage on the part of these brave fellows?—who know, we must remember, that had the King, the Government, and Parliament, on the day when the Germans demanded passage through our country in order to attack France, made but a sign of the head, or even maintained silence, our nation would have been spared its martyrdom.

"Voor de Duitsche werken? Nooit! Of nog veel min onze naam op papier zetten! Leve Albert, Koning der Belgen!"

That is to say: "Work for the Germans? Never! And still less sign anything for them, no matter what! Long live Albert, King of the Belgians!"

* * *

What a beauty there is in those few lines, and what a lesson!

Let us be true to the common thought which inspired them. May union around the King, which as if by instinct was realized on the 2nd of August 1914, remain for us the word of command.

Union? More than that: Unity. No more Right, Left and Centre; but the King and the Flag. But one party—Belgium. But a single interest—the Nation.

Do you remember the sacred enthusiasm with

which we were exalted when, by the light of the thunderbolt of the 2nd of August, our collective soul was to us so clearly revealed ; when at the historic session of Parliament, all the representatives of the country echoed the oath of the King and resolved to endure all things rather than sell themselves or yield ; when in our squares and streets the crowd cheered our soldiers as they hastened to the frontier.

Let us treasure the precious memory of those thrilling and heroic hours, and if it must be that time is to pass, may it be only to give to our union and our activities a greater serenity and a more efficient method.

Method !

Henceforward every one understands that in the present war all, civilians and soldiers, women and men, those in the rear and those in the front, have their necessary and useful rôles. The Army where it fights is the white-crested wave which hurls itself furiously upon the shore. Behind it, there is the ocean of national energy whence it borrows its rhythm and whence it draws its strength. Let us bring to this vast reservoir, as the Government directs us, everything that is ours of resource and ability. Let us cast away into it also our personal interests, our comfortable habits and our pleasures.

And this up to complete victory. I say " complete," because nothing but a premature peace could any longer serve the designs of Germany. I say " complete," because Belgium must be resolved upon such a peace more than any other nation.

Not only is this the price of her restoration, not only is her whole future involved, as is that of all the Powers of the second rank, in her making certain that Justice henceforth alone shall dominate the relations which subsist between States, but her geographical situation makes, for her alone, her liberty and her strength both the conditions of her own progress and the guarantee of the future safety of Europe.

This complete victory, the work of patience and endurance, the reward of supreme effort, will come. It approaches already. And already our watchful eyes divine its advance, through the storm and the hurricane, through the fog of seas and the smoke of battles, like unto the winged figure which the ancients sculptured on the prows of their ships.

* * *

And when it shall have come, who is there who does not already hope that our union of to-day in the war, around the King, will remain the union of to-morrow, in the restoration ?

Our bleeding country will then have to recover the art of living, while it will find itself faced by many problems of a national and international kind. To repair our ruins ; to heal our wounds ; to assure ourselves against all chance of a future attack by Germany ; there, at the crossways of Europe, to resume our rank in the universal civilization and economy, but a rank raised higher by the measure of our pride in our sacrifices and the bravery of our

soldiers; to provide for our coming generations one and the same national ambition. Who then will dream of renewing the bad old ways of aforetime, or of giving more importance to the particularities of groups of classes and of language than to this great common task? Shall we not, rather, see, beautified by all the majesty of the Epic through which we shall have lived and whose spirit our soldiers shall carefully preserve, the great State policy which guided us during the first years of our Independence? I think so, indeed.

How brightly is the future of this fraternal collaboration in the restoration and elevation of our country illuminated for us, my dear compatriots, by our assurance of the noble and powerful friendships which we have so firmly acquired!

In his last speech in the Reichstag, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg defended himself—poor innocent! —against the charge of having at any time spoken of the annexation of Belgium.

Nevertheless, exhibiting for us an indescribable species of hypocritical sympathy, which is more hateful to us than his hate, he declared that "Germany would never permit Belgium to become, whether politically or economically, the vassal of England and France."

Well, every honest person knows that Belgium has never been, and intends never to be, the vassal of any one.

Ever since she was constituted a nation, she has shown herself at the same time jealously proud of her

independence and faithful to a scruple, to martyrdom, to the neutrality which has been imposed upon her.

But the war, which has cost her and continues to cost her so many sacrifices, sorrows and losses, has already won for her at least one right : that of freely nourishing her affections, of affirming them and of proving them.

And how thoroughly these affections have been won and will be retained by those Allied Powers, and particularly by France, who, guarantors of our independence and neutrality, have added to the most loyal respect for the given word the most tactful and attentive friendship.

Ever since 1830, upon the day and the morrow of birth as an independent State, it is France who has encouraged us, it is she who has helped us.

In 1870, during that tragic year when we followed so closely and soothed as best we might her pain, from the first day of the war, it was France who loyally declared to the Government of Queen Victoria that come what might, and whatever advantage she might reap, she would respect our soil and our independence.

Since then, under Leopold II and under Albert I, the Government of the Third Republic has let no occasion escape her by which she might emphasize for us her sympathy and her confidence.

Who can say that we should not love France ?

Who can deny us the right to cry it aloud, with all the strength of our gratitude ?

Yes, we love her, as we love great England, who has always been equally our loyal friend, and with them will we detest and do battle against the two dishonoured Powers who, after having brutally violated the neutrality of a little country which they had sworn to protect, seem to wish to sink each day a little lower into their own shame and barbarity and crime.

While, the longer this war lasts, the more decisive and deep-seated become our reasons, each day, for loving France and our motives for admiring her.

At Clermont-Ferrand, on the pedestal of the statue of Vercingetorix, I remember reading this proud reply which the Gallic hero addressed to Cæsar :

J'ai pris les armes pour la liberté de tous.

Three weeks ago, during the solemn session of the Institute, I heard M. Paul Deschanel, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, cry in an impassioned burst of eloquence : " To-day all France fights for all humanity."

And so, after twenty centuries, France remains faithful to her destiny. What chiefly characterizes her is not pride, nor envy, nor the worship of force. It is her worship of the Ideal, her devotion to Honour, even another's.

And this is why all the nations for whom Right is not an idle word nor Good Faith a " scrap of paper," salute her, admire her, and love her like a mother.

IV

THE FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES OF BELGIUM'S RESISTANCE

THE PERMANENCE OF BELGIAN NATIONALITY

THE energy and tenacity which Belgium has opposed and continues to oppose to the German aggression have not only excited the admiration of the world. We must admit that they have also, for many people, been a matter for surprise.

The world at large had but a dim conception of Belgian nationality. It regarded this nationality as a sort of wholly artificial barrier, invented on the morrow of the triumphant rising of 1830 by a few discreet diplomats, particularly by Palmerston. Among the historians themselves there were many who had no suspicion that the roots of this nationality were buried in a very distant past. Did not Hippolyte Taine, in his classical work *The Art of the Low Countries*, write this authoritative sentence: "All the world knows that the name of Belgium dates from the French Revolution"?

Nothing, however, could be more false. The Belgians, whom Cæsar describes for us in his *Commentaries* as "the bravest of all the Gauls," have never ceased, throughout the ages, to exist as a true

nationality. Any one who studies closely the history of Europe from the moral, political and economic points of view, will discover in the country watered by the Scheldt and the Meuse a permanent ethical group, whereinto the streams of German and Latin blood have never ceased to flow, there to mingle and combine into a special civilization, whose manners, customs and habits have always been definitely distinct from those of their neighbours.

It is true that at times this nationality has been split up. The Middle Ages saw it divided into principalities, duchies and counties, of which some owed allegiance to the French Crown—Flanders, for instance—while others, like the Ecclesiastical Principality of Liége, were vassals of the German Empire.

It is true that this nationality does not enjoy the benefit of unity of language. Two linguistic groups have always divided its territory between them, and the frontier which marks off their respective zones is very much the same to-day as it was in the twelfth century.

It is true that this nationality has no natural geographical frontiers. While its extent is restricted, the territory in which the Belgians have never ceased to dwell, to struggle and to suffer, is of an extremely diverse character. Dunes along the sea coast, plains in Flanders, sand in Campine, hills in Brabant, rocky valleys along the Meuse, plateaux in the Ardennes—what a variety of landscape in so small a space!

It is true that this nationality has long been dominated by foreign Powers. In modern times it has been governed, in turn, by Spain, Austria, France and Holland.

Yet in spite of all these unfavourable circumstances, which have often deceived the superficial observer, Belgian nationality is just as real as the English, the French or the German. It is an historical entity which has never been absorbed by its neighbours and the destiny of which has never ceased to develop along characteristic and organic lines, in correlation with certain peculiar interests and requirements.

This theory, which illumines so vividly the rôle which Belgium is playing in the grand drama of to-day, I propose to prove to you by a rapid survey of her past.

* * *

Let us attempt to obtain a general conception of that changeful, strange and passionate history which has enabled Belgium to survive so many international storms, as well as her own misfortunes and errors, and to become entitled to adopt the famous motto : *Fluctuat nec mergitur.*

Belgian nationality first declares itself in an heroic defence of the soil against the greed of Rome. After twenty centuries, it is the same resistance which she offers to-day. Later, during the break up of the Roman Empire, she absorbs, almost without a struggle, those Franks who quickly attached them-

selves to our soil and became mingled with our race. The Carlovingians were true Belgians. The cradle of their glory was Landen and Herstal in the Liége country. The institutions which Charlemagne developed and spread through his whole empire were the customs and laws which were already existing in our land.

For example, the Feudal System, which established itself through the continuance, first in individuals and then in families, of offices instituted by the Carlovingians. Our nationality sought safety under its ægis. As it fought against Roman autocracy, so it fought in the ninth century against the imperial despotism of Germany. It saw its decline in the Peace of Cologne and its end in the battle of Woeringen.

During the amazing upheavals of the twelfth century, elsewhere marked by so much violence and excess, Belgium appeared as the real guiding spirit of the time. By making the Peace of God and the Paix de Comte, she expressed the ideals of Christianity and Chivalry in all their purity. Again she adopted them when she drew all Europe along the road to the Holy Sepulchre, which was to prove the road of Progress. It was our Belgian blood which reigned with Godfrey of Bouillon at Jerusalem and Baldwin of Hainault at Constantinople. At the same time Belgium, by her charters, her constitutions and her "Joyous Entries," was initiating the other nations into the political life by those

expressions of the perfect balance of all her social forces.

This century and the next marked the zenith of her fortunes. While her towns were increasing in number everywhere, while the weaving industry flourished in the valley of the Scheldt and that of metals beside the Meuse; while her ships, capable of carrying whole armies into the East, trafficked in the wealth of the world; while her rivers in the south and the north and her roads eastwards and westwards were flooded with merchandise, her cathedrals and belfries sprang up from her soil, like flowers in stone, to the brave songs of the Companions.

But Belgian nationality was soon to suffer from its very exuberance.

The famous battle of the 11th July of 1302 was the great day of our communal period, for it preserved Flanders from a foreign yoke, but by what sterile and fatal days was it to be followed!

Throughout this century of storm, disturbances are everywhere, authority nowhere. Power has passed into the hands of a *bourgeois* oligarchy which uses it with caution, exaggerating commercial advantages and multiplying economic privileges. The love of work grows steadily weaker. The taxes mount to unheard-of figures. Each man has his hands among the public money or relies for his living upon some statute. The great Flemish cities —Ghent, Bruges, Ypres—oppress the small towns

fight amongst themselves, and are themselves the theatre of incessant conflicts between *bourgeois* and craftsman. It is then that Jacques van Artevelde, the " wise man of Flanders " and the author of the treaty of 1337, which contains the germ of the confederation of all our principalities, appeals to the son of Edward III. And from that time onwards becomes visible the part which England is henceforth to play towards our nation.

Though the confederation of which Artevelde dreamed does not materialize, the personal union of our States—of all the Belgium of to-day—is realized in the fifteenth century. This is the work of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold—the grand leaders of the West.

These two men, the first thanks to his skill, the second in spite of his rashness, bring our Flemish and Walloon provinces together. And in spite of disputes and wars, our nationality now enjoys some admirable days of power, wealth and beauty. Charles V, the great-grandson of Charles the Bold, was born in Ghent and was wholly of our race. The Belgians rightly considered him as a national sovereign. As Van Praet has so well said : " Charles V never applied the levelling instrument of despotism to the institutions of our provinces. The country retained its character. The aristocracy was in no way humiliated nor was the principle of national representation destroyed." Judged fairly, Charles V appears as the upholder, during an epoch of

despotism, of the work which was accomplished by our national dynasties during an epoch of liberty. Supported by Belgian money, aided by Belgian ministers, Belgian generals, Belgian diplomatists, he arrested, in accordance with our traditions, the flood of Mahommedanism, defended Catholicism, and preserved for our administrative and judicial institutions those characteristics of autonomy and variety which, even to-day, offer so great a contrast to the spirit of " centralization " prevailing in France.

Just as fully as Charles V understood our national character, did his son despise or misconceive it. This mistake, which most clearly showed itself in the face of a threatening agitation on the part of the nobility, was the chief cause of that unlucky storm which ended by dividing the Low Countries into two portions.

Once that storm had blown over, our nationality entered upon a long period of political prostration, but of moral and artistic activity. No longer was political energy displayed, but, on the other hand, arose learned men such as Stevin, Van Helmont, Bollandus and Justus Lipsius, painters like Rubens, Van Dyck and Teniers. In the midst of incessant war and invasion, bled in turn by hostile armies and veteran soldiers who were supposed to protect it, under the direction of a States General without power, the Belgian nationality seemed to languish and waste away. At one moment, it even looked

as if the Treaty of the Barrier was about to bury it forever, like the stone laid upon a tomb.

The Brabançon Revolution was a national reaction —a reaction against the innumerable encroachments of the Austrian Government; a reaction of our traditional habits and beliefs, oppressed by Joseph II in the name of a tyrannical philosophy—Joseph, that crazy Emperor who persisted in discovering amongst us maladies which we had never even suspected: just as, in Molière's comedy, Toinette proves to Argan that his leg and his arm ought to be amputated and "that it is a bad sign when a sick man is unaware of any discomfort."

Our provincial Parliaments protest. Joseph II dissolves them. The Belgians of 1789 reply by an insurrection and by the foundation of that shortlived Republic of the United States of Belgium, which brought home to us all the reality of the common Fatherland. Out of this our nationality emerged, with the Hague Congress, less enslaved than formerly and ripe for a decisive attempt. Under the domination of France, the Peasants' War marks a new protest of the national sentiment, which, finally, explodes in 1830.

Though, in 1839, Belgian nationality was forced to submit to a cruel mutilation, by the Treaty of the Twenty-four Articles, which robbed it, together with a part of Limbourg and a part of Luxembourg, of parts of itself, since then this plant, whose strength has only grown the more robust the more obstacles

it has had to overcome, has even increased in size and in vigour.

In 1914 and since, those who know its history have, together with the whole world, watched admiringly the energy of its resistance; but that resistance has not surprised them. In the light of the past they understand the present.

* * *

This persistence of Belgian nationality, which thus emerges from the study of our vicissitudes throughout the centuries, finds its confirmation in the persistence of those special characteristics which the Belgians generally recognize in one another.

If the Belgian is not so deeply imbued as other races with respect for the doctrine of absolute equality or for the principle of the absolute superiority of the State, he is, on the other hand, animated by an ardent love of liberty and a respect for the rights of the individual, which oppose themselves to the encroachments of authority, favour individualism, and tolerate no other institutions than those which conform to their sentiments.

To these institutions the Belgian people holds fast with an undying attachment. It perseveres in this to such a degree that to-day its institutions, both political, communal, social, military, judicial and administrative, preserve the indelible imprint of those of former times. The principle of the free

choice of the sovereign by the nation and its association with him in the supreme authority, are to be found alike in the speech made by Ambiorix to Cæsar, in the complaints of the communes of Flanders, Brabant and Liége, in the recriminations addressed by the nobles to Philip II, in the remonstrances offered by the States General to Joseph II and in the protests of our representatives at the Convention.

The theory of self-government has never ceased to enjoy a legal existence : our legislative chambers are the ancient Assemblies of May transformed first into *placita generalia* and then into States General. As for our communal independence—the inheritance of eight centuries of history—it forms to-day, as in so many of the critical periods of our past, the very buckler of our patriotic resistance.

For the right understanding of the history of our military organization, we must remember how deep-rooted were the precautions taken, not against national security, but against the life of the barracks and the garrison, in the midst of a population like our own, which is accustomed to confuse the soldier (*soldat*) and the veteran (*soudard*) with the invader or the occupier of its territory. On the other hand, the old communal militias and our ancient *Serments* have continued to exist in Belgium under the name of the " Civic Guard " and in the form of special corps.

Attached as she is to her civil institutions, Belgium

is no less deeply devoted to her religious traditions. During the period of the Crusades the Christian belief was very powerful amongst us. "It was at that time," writes Pirenne, the historian, "stronger there than in any other part of Europe. It took possession of the national imagination so completely that, throughout the Middle Ages, the peoples of the valleys of the Scheldt and the Meuse never ceased to be distinguished for the ardour of their faith and the sincerity of their piety." The monastery, which flourished so greatly, seems to have been the effect rather than the cause of this condition of affairs. The Crusades, wherein our pilgrim soldiers "were truly and entirely," as Pirenne elsewhere observes, "the soldiers of the Pope," enthusiastically affirmed the national sentiment. From century to century, history shows us how strong this sentiment was in Belgium. It explains those famous and peculiarly uncompromising declarations made by our States General before they ratified the Pacification of Ghent.

The same feeling inspired those legions of monks and missionaries which François Xavier summoned to the ends of India: "*Da mihi Belgas.*" It is still manifest in the Revolution of Brabant, as throughout our internal policy since 1830. And is it not this which to-day explains the lofty moral and patriotic influence which the Belgian episcopate exerts, in the teeth of the enemy, over all our people in the invaded territory? And how can we fail to

recognize also, in the resistance of that population, the happy effect of another ancient characteristic of Belgium? I mean, the integrity of the judicial authority and its absolute independence of the political.

Thus all the national characteristics, recognized in our past and illuminated by History, show us how strongly we are bound to the ancient inhabitants of our soil.

Are not these things the products of our soil—the true Belgian chivalry, the sound common sense, the family traditions deep-rooted in the heart, the capacity for organization and mutual association in the arrangement of our lives, in our industrial enterprises and in intellectual things, and, to-day, in the work of feeding and assisting our people—and Belgian "*bonhomie*," that compound of chaff, a boy's mischief, and that spirit of "*zwanse*," which contrasts its love of amusements at once with French wit and the thickheadedness of Germany—and also the attraction which the pleasures of the table and the cellar have generally for the Belgians? Yes, we may readily admit this weakness—may we not?—in these days when Belgium has proved that, if she was the country of good living, she can also, when necessary, be the country of good dying.

And everywhere, throughout the ages—from the reclaiming of our polders and the clearing of our forests down to the colonization of the Congo—courage for toil, eagerness for the task, work both

considered and calm and resolute—calm as our plains, resolute as our rocks. "A race which accomplishes things," says a French critic, M. Charles Morice, "born of constancy in effort and with no time for learning to dream, which first and always has been compelled to absorb itself in the material necessities of an existence that is threatened by the sky, the sea and men. A race which has hardly any resources but its own courage."

All these characteristics are expressed not only in the study of events, but in all the research to which psychologists and archæologists have devoted their laborious work.

But in order that this nationality should be known and understood, not only by a few learned men, but by the entire world, it was necessary that the tragic adventure through which we are to-day passing should have been experienced. The heroism of the Belgium of 1914 has revealed a nationality of twenty centuries whose will to live has displayed itself with an irresistible force, and now proves itself deeper than all sorrow, braver than all sacrifice and stronger than death itself.

THE MILITARY TRADITIONS OF THE BELGIANS[1]

EVERY man is the type of his race. Without knowing it, the Belgian soldier of the Great War

[1] Preface to a book by M. Maurice des Ombiaux: *Fastes militaires des Belges* (Paris, Bloud et Gay).

reproduces the thoughts and deeds of his ancestors. He renews, while giving to them a new breadth and beauty, the virtues of the Communiers of Grœninghe and of the woodcutters of Franchimont, the *Patriotes* of the Brabançon Revolution and the blue-bloused volunteers of the September Days.

While our Army is writing with its blood the most tragic and most glorious page of our history, it is a labour of duty no less than of immediate importance to fill it with the sentiment of continuity and, by recalling for it our past, to associate as it were the valour of our ancestors with the heroism of their descendants.

I can gladly imagine our officers and soldiers on the Yser—yes, even the simplest of our "*jas*"—during their watches in camp, amusing, instructing and stimulating themselves by reading or listening to these *Fastes militaires des Belges* which M. Maurice des Ombiaux has so happily put together.

By the glow of the camp fires, how brightly all that past will be lit up for them! And how much better they will understand the events of which they have already heard! How near to themselves will they feel these soldiers of the old wars, of whose great deeds they perhaps knew nothing! Times and actions mingling together in their imagination, some hero of Kollin or of Belgrade will appear to them with the familiar features of their comrades of Liége, or Haelen, of Hofstade or Dixmude or of Steenstraete.

It is a privilege reserved for all who have taken part, either as actors or spectators, in any one of those great disturbances which periodically shake humanity to its centre, that history henceforth assumes for them a significance which it never possessed in the calm days of peace. In the stress of great storms, all that was fixed ceases to be so. The sense for the greatness of events and for the providential destiny of peoples reveals itself. The great figures of the past are no longer distant shadows, vague and motionless. These shadows grow in stature. They move, and their march accompanies the march of the new generations.

In one of the most striking visions of the Bible, the Prophet Ezekiel is transported into the midst of an immense plain all scattered over with dry bones. Suddenly, beneath the breath of the four winds of the Spirit, the prophet sees these bones arise in all the strength of life and become a vast, indomitable army.

So for us to-day our military past lives again. The bones of so many sons of Belgium, who have died in the course of centuries in the defence of our liberties, thrill to the echo of the bitter conflicts which perpetuate and make greater their work. The Belgians who, step by step, defended their land against the covetousness of Cæsar, those who under the orders of Charles Martel or Godfrey de Bouillon fought for Western civilization, the men of the Flemish militia who, by the side of Breydel and

de Coninck, poured out their blood for their liberties, the Walloon colliers and woodmen of Josse de Strailhe, who sacrificed their lives to revenge the city which a perjured king had betrayed, the soldiers of Vandermeersch who, in 1789, at Turnhout, drove the Kaiserliks in rout before them, our fathers of 1830, whose common sepulchre in the Place des Martyrs in Brussels has become, as it were, the tangible symbol of legitimate authority which opposes a detested and despised invader, all the men of our past are now recalled for us. They watch the soldiers of King Albert with approving eyes. They admire them, they encourage them, they fight by their sides. And because of this, the courage of those soldiers burns more fiercely and more resolutely.

Confronted with so crowded a past, M. Maurice des Ombiaux had but one embarrassment—how to choose. This marvellous story-teller for whom a world outside us exists and who unites to the picturesque veracity of the Walloon the exuberant richness of Flemish colours, has not pretended to call up for our eyes the whole panorama of our military annals. He has selected certain characteristic figures and episodes, around whom the pride of our patriotism has grouped, with a kindred feeling of admiration, other names, and other exploits. Let me, in turn, recall those two stout men of Tournais, Englebert and Létalde, who were the first to stand upon the walls of Jerusalem; Quènes de Béthune

and many another captain, who, with Baldwin of Hainault, founded the Latin Empire of Constantinople ; in the fifteenth century, Jacques de Lalaing, the " good Flemish knight " ; in the sixteenth century, Charles of Lannoy, into whose hands François I gave his sword at Pavia ; then, Egmont, the conqueror of Gravelines ; in the seventeenth century, T'Serclaes de Tilly, Clerfayt, who gained the day at Neerwinden, and that exquisite, the Prince de Ligne, who " laughed at danger," and whose military gifts were scarcely surpassed by the graces of his person and mind.

Nearer to us—and too little known—let me recall that glorious Revolution of Brabant and the campaign of the Meuse of 1790, when we saw the Belgian volunteers of every age, running from every quarter of the young country that was trying to live and rallying round a new flag which has become our own, assail for six months, with more heroism than skill, an Imperial army as numerous as it was seasoned. What a touching story, among many others, is that of that company of the Canaries, out of which were born our carabineers of to-day, formed by a stout partisan of Brussels, Jean Baptiste Dumonceau, who became, later, one of Napoleon's generals ! This company, among the last to be recruited, was composed almost wholly of volunteers of short stature who, for this reason, had been rejected elsewhere. Equipped Heaven knows how, Dumonceau had found nothing with which to clothe them but some

rubbishy cloth of a bright yellow colour, whence came the nickname which they soon rendered glorious. In the course of this campaign, wherein they were employed upon certain attacks of an extraordinary audacity, it was established as a fact that never had a Canary given way by so much as a step, save upon the order of his commandant. Only once did Dumonceau degrade a soldier. This man, placed as sentinel, solitary, on the right bank of the Meuse, and attacked by a considerable body of Imperialists, had believed that he could swim across the river, intending, as he said, to warn his comrades. The same day, this man blew out his brains. At the end of the campaign no more than a handful of the Canaries remained.

The long peace that reigned in our country from 1830 and the international statute which neutralized our foreign policy were assuredly not calculated to develop the military qualities of the Belgians. Yet the sap had never ceased to flow through the tree and its branches. Almost everywhere where it was possible to find fighting going on, one could discover, and in the post of danger, one or another son of our soil, whose martial spirit had proved unable to accommodate itself to a military existence that was of necessity fixed and monotonous. The Mexican adventure and above all the Epic of the Congo have witnessed brilliantly to this; and the history of the Army of the Dutch Indies, like that of the Foreign Legion, has never ceased to do the

same. How many Belgians have gone out to war, how many have died, under those distant skies, who would have been so happy could they have fought for their own country! I cannot but think, among others who have been seized with a like homesickness for the battle-front, of my elder brother, who quitted the regiment of the Guides in order to go and fight in Egypt under the orders of Kitchener, and died, a colonel, at the age of thirty-eight.

No, the martial valour of the Belgians has never failed. And it is no sudden impulse, but a sort of apotheosis, this marvellous heroism of our soldiers of to-day, which all the world applauds and which illumines with its glory the noblest and the most unselfish of causes.

Let us cultivate these military virtues. They will retain all their value, even when this hideous and critical war shall have come to an end.

For all of us, in a world which will demand to be built up again, physical education will appear more and more as a necessity of individual life. While, from a moral standpoint, it gives to each man initiative, a liking for action and self-confidence, it enriches the nation with deep-seated energies without which her destiny can only decline. On the day of the aggression we felt all the truth of the noble words which were spoken by our King on the 4th of August to the Belgian Parliament, and which he has never ceased since, as before, the outbreak of war to illustrate each day by his example: "A

country which defends itself is of necessity respected by all." Upon the day of Peace, we must not forget this other maxim—cruel though, in its realism, it may appear: "One is truly free only when one is strong."

THE ROOTS OF OUR NATIONALITY

An address delivered on the 26th of November 1915 *at the Opening Session of the Geographical Society of Paris.*[1]

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

We are living in a time when, for each of us, and particularly for those upon whom the responsibilities of government are laid, it is necessary to keep in our minds a truth which Michelet has crystallized in the following words: "Economy of speech makes for energy of action."

Profound though the truth of this maxim may be,

[1] The session was held under the honorary presidency of M. Etienne, formerly Minister of War, and the acting presidency of M. Lallemand, Member of the Institute. On the platform there were present: Baron Guillaume, Ambassador of Belgium to France; General Gouraud; Generals Garnier des Garets and Lebon; Baron Hulot, General Secretary of the Geographical Society; M. de Margerie, M. Raphaël George-Lévy, of the Institute; the explorers, Commandants Zeil and de Gerlache, leaders of the South Polar Expeditions organized by the *Belgica*, as well as numerous other celebrities both political and scientific. A lecture was delivered by M. Pierre Nothomb upon "Belgium of Other Days."

and convinced of its wisdom though I am, it is hardly possible, I think, that after the reception with which I have just met I should not express to you my gratitude for this new demonstration of the friendship uniting France and Belgium, which we owe to the initiative of the Geographical Society.

This demonstration gains a peculiar value from the very fame of this illustrious Society, which has been for nearly a century one of the foci of the French genius. Its value is increased, again, by the reputation of the distinguished scientist who is our Chairman to-night and the well-deserved prestige of the statesman who has consented to become its patron. It affords me great satisfaction to salute in him a master of colonial policy whom our late King held in very high and cordial estimation.

This friendship that exists between France and Belgium, to which we are now so long accustomed, scarcely needs to be expressed in words.

What could phrases, writings, diplomatic agreements themselves, add to all that we have seen, heard and experienced during the last year and a quarter: the burning appeal which is addressed to us by our fellow-citizens, yours as well as ours, whose fields and towns the barbarian invasion has overwhelmed, while it seeks, fruitlessly, to stifle their patriotism and confidence; the common sentiments which are daily more actively aroused in our hearts by the cynicism and the cruelty of an unscrupulous aggressor; and, above all, the blood of our sons,

that pure blood which flows upon our soil, mingled with the blood of great England's young manhood, in the defence of Justice and Civilization itself?

Is there not here, for the cementing of the most wholehearted of friendships, more than all the phrases or the signatures which could be exchanged?

Your friendship is filled, you say, with gratitude for that Belgium, neutral and loyal, who to-day stoutly resists the aggressor, and who met the shock of his first assault, and also with compassion for the trials—truly indescribable—which our country is now suffering.

Believe me, in every Belgian heart there is mingled with this friendship, together with a profound gratitude for the loyalty of France, the guarantor of our independence—for the generosity of France, the comforter of our misfortunes—admiration for the spectacle, at once prodigious and infectious, which the soul of France to-day presents: her patriotism, which subordinates all other interests to the necessary union and action; her courage in the field, compounded of valour and enthusiasm, but also of method and tenacity; her charity, which devotes to the service of the war's victims all those whom any cause prevents from fighting; her self-denial, which finds even in her sacrifice, her mourning and her tears, new reasons for doing her duty.

Never has France shown herself to the world in a fairer light. And never, perhaps, has she better played her historic rôle than now, when the real

character of this gigantic war is gradually revealing itself. Confronting a predatory Empire, which has grown and means still to grow by the oppression of nations weaker than itself and which has only signed international agreements in order the better to prepare for its aggressions, France to-day appears truly as the Champion of the honour and liberty of all mankind.

* * *

What is a nation? In a definition that is famous, Renan replies: "It is a soul, made up of two things: one in the past—the possession in common of rich memories; the other in the present—the will to continue to preserve in its unity the heritage which has been received intact."

That a nation is a soul, I admit gladly. But it is also a body. The nation does not know itself independently of a sector of the globe whereon it has been formed and developed, where its children have in turn lived, worked, loved, fought, suffered, and where in their turn they repose.

It is not, gentlemen, fitting for me to recall in your presence to what a degree the living creature adapts itself to its environment, to what a degree the modifications of the earth's surface, its fortuitous features, its heights, its valleys, with their requirements and their advantages, influence the groupings and dispersals of mankind, their thoughts and their actions.

In so far as regards the Belgian nation, the body

which Nature has given her is a land of forests and streams which descend, as it were in successive terraces, from the plateaux of the Ardennes, with their rocky valleys, down to the great plains of Condroz, Hesbaye and Hainault, the hills of Brabant, the polders of Flanders, and the dunes and beaches of the North Sea.

In the basins of the Meuse and the Scheldt, occupying, clearing and enriching that soil which it was compelled to conquer little by little from the great forests, the marshes and the sea, and which it has had to defend without ceasing against the hostility of climate and the covetousness of man, a true nation, first joining and then commingling the stream of Franks with that of the ancient Celts, has developed itself with characteristics both continuous and organic, and interests and needs altogether peculiar to itself.

Such is the geographical explanation of this Belgian nation which thrusts deeply into this soil its ancient and historical roots.

As to these historical roots, the general public is far from knowing what they are, or even from suspecting their existence.

Some people supposed, in their simplicity, that Belgium dated from 1830; they were not unlike those who, upon the word of Boileau, imagined that French literature begins with Malherbe.

While I was listening to our lecturer a moment ago, I called to mind a bitter observation of J.-B.

Nothomb in his admirable work *An Historical and Political Essay upon the Belgian Revolution of* 1830. "For two and a half centuries," he writes, "foreigners have been distorting our history, and the original documents by means of which we might be able to do justice to the memory of our ancestors remain buried in the archives of Governmental departments. The history of Belgium would be, if it were truly written, a long labour of giving credit where credit is due."

This work of justification we have seen undertaken. And it is a strange circumstance that one of those who has been engaged upon it, and one who has achieved the happiest results, is a German scholar, Lamprecht, whose main ideas our great Belgian historians, Kurth and Pirenne, have followed and developed. No one, perhaps, more clearly than this learned gentleman (who nevertheless did not hesitate to sign the "Kolossal" Manifesto of the ninety-three) has shown that throughout the centuries, in spite of all the vicissitudes which she has known, Belgium has always remained an *historic* and *inassimilable personality*, distinguished from her neighbours not only by conditions of existence all her own, but also by needs and resources, qualities and defects, which, taken together, stamp her individuality with a character at once original and indelible.

In vain was Belgium, during our Middle Ages, divided, even as were, by the way, the Great Powers

of to-day, into small independent States. These small States, though dominated by the same political, economic and social influences, have always been characterized—in the days of feudalism as under the communal regime—by the same passions and similar institutions.

At every critical period of their existence they have stood firmly together, like a wrought stone which shows several sides to the world.

From the Flemish to the Walloon districts, from the country of the weavers to that of the ironworkers —from one to the other of our industrious and flourishing cities, which have never ceased, by road and canal, to exchange their merchandise—the carillons of our colleges and of our belfries have hymned the same hopes and the same pride, while our charters and our "Joyous Entries" expressed, like so many echoes, the same civic and industrial liberties.

In vain, during more recent times—after a moment's national union under Charles the Bold —was this country drawn within the orbit of this or that European Power by the laws of royal succession or through war. Though the foreign master may have exercised his power over her soil, he has never either vanquished or possessed her soul.

Our provinces, after the sixteenth century, came under the authority of sovereigns who were seated on the thrones of Spain or Austria. But, for our provinces, these monarchs were only the descendants

of the Dukes of Brabant or of the Counts of Flanders and Hainault. They never suffered any one to pervert the institutions which they had inherited.

We see this clearly under Philip II. We see it better still under Joseph II, what time our forefathers replied to the pretensions of that Emperor by that Revolution of Brabant whose motto was *Pro aris et focis*—"For our altars and our hearths." We see it in the Peasants' War. We see it finally and above all in our Revolution of 1830. And if so great a success rewarded that Revolution, it was not owing to the motives by which it was justified, any more than to the consent which the Powers gave to it when it had been carried out, or to the wisdom of the two Leopolds, who consolidated the tottering fabric. The genuine and essential explanation of that success is that a nationality, whose life-blood so many vicissitudes had, in the course of centuries, checked without ever drying it up, insisted, finally and imperiously, upon its own full and definite freedom. And if, in August 1914, when upon us there burst the most terrible of all the Barbarian invasions, there was heard in Belgium but one cry and was seen but one movement in defence of Justice as of honour, if that resistance did not and will not fail, those who knew our history aright were in no way surprised. They knew in how vigorous a soil the Belgian tree had, for long ages, anchored its sturdy roots.

* * *

We speak gladly of what we love. And your sympathy will excuse me if, after having reminded you of what are the natural and historical foundations of Belgian nationality, I linger yet a moment to show you how this nationality derives also from other causes, which reach, in strange wise, out beyond its frontiers and are not without their importance for the destiny of all mankind. These causes are of both a political and a moral nature.

Let us first consider those that are political.

The destiny of Europe has been the sport, now at one time, now at another, of two systems. The first is mad and unsafe. This is Imperialism, that is to say, the policy of a nation that, drunk with its own strength or pride, strives to absorb others and to impose upon them its hegemony or its absolute dominion. The second is sane and stable: maintaining a due balance, that is to say, care for the rights of all and respect for all nationalities.

The first system has several times been tried; it has always failed. And following on each check which it has received, the Law of Equilibrium has reacted by opposing to defeated covetousness a stiffer action and a more powerful counterpoise.

It was the traditional task of Belgium, or, more generally speaking, of the Low Countries, placed as they were at the crossways of nationality and forming a cockpit for every one's disputes, to ensure, in that middle region which they occupied, the maintenance or the re-establishment of this necessary balance.

This rôle of barrier or buffer State Richelieu was one of the first to understand and to formulate. While Louis XIV, Danton and Napoleon misconceived it, Prussia and England did not fail to maintain it against them. In 1814, Wellington insisted upon its importance in very definite terms. At the Congress of Vienna this formula received the approval of all Europe, and so, with this object in view, the kingdom of the Low Countries was invented, a feeble device which was speedily compromised by the events of 1830. Europe, when she agreed, at the Conference of London, to the destruction of this barrier which she herself had created, seems to have regarded the perpetual and guaranteed neutrality of Belgium as a new development of the principle with which her own security was bound up.

It is enough to recall these well-known circumstances to perceive how closely the interests of Belgian nationality are interwoven with those of the Powers, how definitely that nationality is indispensable and, if I may say so, is the *very axis* of the balance of power in Europe.

* * *

Our nationality is founded also upon reasons of morality.

For centuries, owing to her geographical situation and her political importance, Belgium has served to some extent as a point of convergence for the armies of all nations. Not to travel very far back

into history, Seneffe and Fleurus, Neerwinden, Ramillies and Fontenoy, Jemappes and Waterloo are all Belgian names. And so Napoleon had good reason for saying, "Belgium is the battlefield of Europe."

But for a century Belgium had ceased to be that battlefield, and had become—and now I quote Elisée Reclus—the school of Europe's experience.

Independent and mistress of herself, full of vigour and enterprise, first under the guidance of Leopold I, who has been called the Nestor of kings, then under that of Leopold II, who so wisely stimulated her progressive spirit and her national sentiment, she exhibited, as much in the spheres of politics and domestic policy as in that of industry, agriculture and art, many fortunate instances of her initiative, which expressed her anxiety to reconcile the needs of her overflowing energy with her respect for her old traditions and her convictions of the necessity for advance. Not only had she become the most densely populated country in the whole world, not only had her economic production raised her to the fifth rank, without question, after England, France, the United States and Germany, but she had lived orderly and honourably, developing her domestic institutions upon the most liberal lines, and, as regarded her neighbours, scrupulously—many have ventured to say, foolishly—faithful to her international obligations.

And so, when on the night of Sunday the 2nd of August 1914 she gave her answer to the outrageous

bargain which Germany proposed to her, Belgium was perhaps entitled to point, as she did, to all that she had done, during eighty-five years, to build up the civilization of the world. If, on that tragic night, she accepted war with a formidable adversary, it was certainly at the bidding of no greed or jealousy; it was not from fear, nor from self-interest, nor in the hope of any revenge, but simply that she might remain faithful to her engagements and fulfil the obligations to which she had set her name. And so it is that to her, where she stands by the side of the Allies in their fight for Justice and Peace, the honour has peculiarly fallen of symbolizing, as against a manifestly and avowedly perjured Power, respect for that given word which is the very basis of civilization.

In 1870, the illustrious Gladstone said in the House of Commons: "Should Belgium be absorbed that voracious appetites might be satisfied, it would be to sound the knell of Public and International Law."

These words are echoed to-day by all the most authoritative voices in both allied and neutral countries; and, summing up as it were their opinion, M. Paul Deschanel said a little time ago at the Sorbonne: "Belgium is not only the stake of this struggle, but the pledge of international righteousness."

Was I not, then, right when I said that our nationality has not only deep-seated causes, both geographical and historical, and that it responds

not only to the political necessities of Europe, but also to moral laws of the most absolute kind, laws which, when the hurricane shall have spent itself, will require more than ever to be re-established in the consideration of humanity?

* * *

Two month ago, disappointed no doubt to witness the failure, one after the other, of his clumsy attempts at seduction and his methods of terrorization, General von Bissing said to a German committee which he had summoned to Brussels to consider—oh! admirable irony!—the restoration of our historic buildings: "The character of the Belgians remains for me a psychological enigma."

A psychological enigma! I do not, it is true, know if Herr von Bissing has consulted the vast treatises which certain masters of Kultur—particularly Wundt, of Leipzig, another of the ninety-three—have devoted to the psychology of races. It is possible. But if, instead of consulting that bookish storehouse of knowledge, he could learn, from one of the countless spies whom he maintains amongst us and at our cost, what the citizens of Belgium are saying to one another, and above all what they are thinking in their hearts, where I doubt if contempt for the invader is not stronger than hate, ah! how easily this enigma, which is none, would become solved for him!

At one stroke he would understand why the Belgians spurned the shameful bargain which would have enabled them to save themselves alive, but at the

cost of their honour—why, when it fell upon them like a bird of prey, the German Army found them standing against them at Liége and Haelen, at Waelhem and on the Yser; why, in the occupied territory, they allow themselves to be imprisoned, deported and shot, rather than yield, and that the enemy may cut off their heads but not bend them; why, in their exile, our wandering and ruined families have never enjoyed a life that was more intense, more cheerful, more united and more noble, all their eyes fixed upon their King and their Army; why, in that Army, every day, our little soldiers are fighting valiantly and falling like heroes, their faces to their own land, and why, each day, new recruits, coming through a thousand perils from that land, hasten to fill up the gaps; why, in spite of its decimated manhood, its ruined fields, its burned towns, its starving workmen, there arises from all that people neither a complaint nor a reproach nor even a sigh of discouragement; why, when it hears the noble declarations of Mr. Asquith and M. Briand and Signor Orlando, which attest their resolution to hold fast unto the end, all that people—although for no other, without doubt, would patience be so meritorious a virtue—approves these declarations with all its energies unanimously resolved on victory.

Ah! I know it happens at times that we ask ourselves—and I understand this well—how long this war, with all the effort and sacrifice and sorrow which it entails, is to last.

To this question there is but one reply—the reply which Abraham Lincoln made to those who put the same question to him:

"You ask me how long this war must still go on. It will go on until our task shall have been accomplished, until our just cause shall have triumphed. For it is necessary that our dead shall not have died in vain; it is necessary that the Government of the People by the People and for the People shall have obtained the certainty that it will not be abolished off the face of the earth."

And so only when the evil beast shall be conquered and deprived of its power to hurt, only then, once more in our homes, proud of having fought by the side of immortal France for the noblest of all causes, made greater by these sufferings which we have together endured and whence a nationality ultimately derives all its unity and all its strength, we shall be able to resume the tremendous and peaceful march of our daily work. Then only, as it is written in the Holy Book, will the iron of lances and swords serve for the forging of new ploughshares and new reaping-hooks.

THE LIBERTY OF NATIONS

ALMOST in the same way as individuals and families, the nations are veritable organisms which are born and grow according to the laws of life. Like the

members of one body, they are interdependent each upon the others, and each has its own mission in the general scheme of Humanity's existence.

This theory, which seems as if it must be a recent one, is, on the contrary, very ancient. It was dear to the scholastic philosophy, and we find it as early as in the *Discourse upon Universal History* of Bossuet. But, after the Renaissance, it was successfully attacked by the legists and the encyclopædists. These men, the victims of their failure to understand the forces of tradition, led away, too, by abstract ideas, both the one school and the other substituted for the theory of nationalities the idea of the man-automaton whom Reason leads towards social unification and for whom climates, institutions, the influences alike of the soil and of history, are nothing but a fortuitous environment. How, then, is it that the earlier idea has re-emerged? Is it the result of experience? Is it the effect of the eternal law of action and reaction? Is it the fruit of the teaching of sociologists, among whom, in France, we may recall the names of Le Play, Tarde and Le Bon?

Whatever may be the cause of it, this development has declared itself more and more strongly in the politics of France, and particularly since the Second Empire.

It is strange that, moving in a direction contrary to that of this development, the science and politics of Germany, which, at the opening of the nineteenth

century, so readily embraced the cause of respect for nationalities, even of the smallest, have both arrived, under the compulsion of an increasingly arrogant and shortsighted Imperialism, at complete justification of the absorption by the Greater States of the peoples of the third or second rank, which are regarded henceforth by the Bernhardis and the Bülows as "institutions both miserable and despicable."

In France, the conception of the Rights of Man did perhaps cause a little injury to the principle of nationality. In Germany, this same principle takes its departure from a totally different philosophy: the Nietzschean doctrine of the Superman.

In this way, at a distance of two centuries, the Liberty of Peoples has encountered two enemies of very different natures. The first of these enemies is the revolutionary theory, born in France in the eighteenth century and of which Bonapartist Imperialism pretended to be the disseminator. It is a generous theory, but one that is full of illusions and misconceptions, since, contrary to the whole teaching of History, it regards nothing but the individual and sees in the individual nothing but a transient being, innocent of traditions.

The second of these two enemies—and how much the less noble!—is that physical realism which arose in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, and gained ground with a singular rapidity. It found its beginnings in the University Education,

whence it has emerged to impose upon all minds, as an axiom, through Prussian discipline, a new doctrine and policy founded upon universal determinism. For this doctrine, as for this policy, the relations which subsist between States—the same as those which subsist between individuals—are phenomena which arise out of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. For them the rights of races and species, even as the rights of individuals, are uniquely dependent upon their vital force.

Before the present war, we all encountered in the writings of Germans certain brutal declarations concerning contempt for the weak, the identity of right with material force, and the necessity that Germany should absorb the peoples of the second rank—Switzerland, Holland, Denmark and Belgium.

When we discovered such ideas formulated in the work of a Tannenberg; when we read in the *Kulturideal* of Adolf Lasson that "the National State can only realize itself by the destruction of other States, and this can logically be effected only by violence"; when we heard Zarathustra proclaim that it is not the just cause which sanctifies war, but the just war which sanctifies all things—often we were tempted to see in these things nothing but the absurdities and paradoxes of a few madmen, not wholly safe.

In reality, everything which has been printed, or said or done on the part of our enemies since the

end of July 1914 has proved to us that this monstrous philosophy is to-day the fundamental base of German thought. It is upon it that has been built up the aggressive Imperialism with which we are at war.

In the speech which he made in the Reichstag on the 12th of December 1916, Herr von Bethmann Hollweg dared to assert : " They (the Central Empires) have not for an instant ceased to believe that respect for the rights of others is, in any degree, incompatible with their own rights and their legitimate interests." Well, we must take the exact reverse of this impudent declaration if we are to appreciate the true causes and at the same time the veritable stake of this great conflict. In reality, German Imperialism stands on the one side, and the Liberty of Nations on the other. These are the adversaries which to-day confront each other.

Stripped of all the subterfuge and lies of diplomacy, German Imperialism—and it is for this reason that it is, philosophically, so inferior to the Bonapartist Imperialism and the Internationalism upon which a certain school is based—is nothing in the world but that instinct of rapine and violence which lies deep within every carnivorous beast.

Events have shown both the virtues and the errors of the metaphysical dreams of the French Revolution. As for that physical realism which Pan-Germanism has sought, by a formidable and unexpected assault, to impose upon the world, its

fate is being decided at this moment and that fate is no longer in doubt.

What new theory of the relations which subsist between men will the evolution of ideas bring us to-morrow? "It was necessary," says Melchior de Vogüé, in his famous *Remarks upon the Centenary Exhibition*, "that a moral principle, representing the reaction of the conscience against the harshness of natural law, should come to soften so much as might be intolerable in a legislation which the teaching of physiology alone had inspired."

For this moral principle, which will provide a solid basis for assisting the weak, for paying respect to liberty and the rights of others, we shall look in vain, I believe, save in the Christian conception of social life. It is this principle which we have honoured, in March 1917, in the Message of President Wilson announcing the entry of the United States into the war.

And without this principle, the Society of Nations must remain forever a myth and a snare.

V

SIGHTS AND LESSONS OF THE WAR

WITH THE FRENCH ARMY

I HAVE been invited—and the invitation is a very flattering one—to say, on the first page of this album, so moving to us who are living to-day, what I think of the French nation at war.[1] . . . The most enthusiastic sentiments are not always the easiest to analyse. . . . While I pause for a moment to disentangle in my own mind and arrange with some regularity the causes of an admiration and a love which I feel more deeply every day, a literary memory arises suddenly before me.

You may remember that charming incident in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* where Uncle Toby, who is deeply impressed by the merits and graces of Mrs. Wadman, asks his honest friend, Corporal Trim, who, like himself, has been wounded in the wars, to bring him a piece of paper, a large piece, so that he may thereon write down methodically a list of those perfections which he has discovered in the charming widow. The corporal obeys, places the paper before him, takes a pen and dips it in the inkpot.

"She has a thousand virtues," says my Uncle Toby.

[1] Documents of the Photographical Section of the French Army.

"Sir," says the corporal, "do you wish me to write them all?"

The corporal dips his pen a second time in the inkpot and waits.

And my uncle, after having reflected, shows him with the end of his pipe the upper left-hand corner of his paper and dictates this word, which the corporal writes down in large letters—Humanity.

* * *

Humanity. Yes, that is the word. Vague though it be, this word sums up of itself the greater part of the deep-rooted traditions and the essential characteristics of French civilization. All that makes for cleanliness and honour in man, who is created in the image of God but who does not take himself for a god, all that distinguishes the honourable and free man from the beast, the monster and the superman, all this is to be found contained in this single word.

Humanity, that is to say, sincerity, purity and courage; the sense of what is just and true; courtesy and tolerance, kindness and care for others, tact and compassion.

Look at it more closely still: this word excludes all those special features of Kultur, the hideousness of which the war reveals to us each day to a greater degree; for instance, the stupidity of the bull, the passion for quantity always dominating that for quality, the spirit of lying, of obscurity and of

servility, the science without conscience, and, above all—above all—a colossal pride, the pride of the wicked angels.

In his book, *In the Service of Germany*, a Prussian non-commissioned officer writes: "Ah, sir, they may well say that the French have more humanity than other peoples."

Here at any rate is one Boche who sees clearly. While Prussia has never fought save for the most cynically selfish reasons, and to-day even in her peace proposals—neither more nor less than the war aims which she announced during the first days of her aggression—we do not see thought for others weigh so much as an atom in the balance of her intentions, History always shows us France inspired by humane ideals. Whether it is a question of delivering the tomb of Christ or of propagating the Rights of Man, France never hesitates to fight for causes greater than herself. How many countries—the United States, Belgium, Greece, Italy and still others—owe to her in no small measure the enjoyment of a free existence! But tell me, where is the nation, great or small, which is beholden in anything to Prussia for its liberty, its independence or its happiness?

The literature of France is humane—humane as the polished and amiable society of which it is the mirror. Her science is no less so; it revolts against pedantry, and if it studies matter in all its marvellous manifestations, it understands its limitations

too well to pretend to make of it the sole rule of conduct. "To be a man; to be one as completely and as profoundly as possible, not in any way to force, to strain, or to lessen human nature; to respect it in oneself and in others; to accept its limitations and to reconcile its contradictory elements"—it is by this formula that M. Victor Giraud defines the ideal which French philosophy has made its own and which it propagates throughout the world. And, truly, this definition is an admirable one.

* * *

Shall I add that France is humane in her Army? Here, officers and soldiers are still men—men whose soul and heart never abandon wholly the rights of the individual. Men who think, who suffer, who have will—and in whom all the qualities of the intellect and of the affections, ennobled by the sentiment of military duty, attain to their fairest development.

Before the war, a comparison in which the traveller pleasantly indulged—but without seizing upon the whole moral interest of it—was that between a march of French *piou-pious* on the plain of Longchamp or even through the boulevards of Paris, and that of a *Wachtparade* at Berlin. On the one hand was the French method, wherein there is nothing affected or formal. Look, carriage, gait—all is natural. These men who march past so resolutely to the sound of their bugles have inborn within them the sense of freedom and measure.

On the other hand, the Teutonic manner. The shrill fifes mark the time for the stiff right-angled movements and mechanical but laboured gestures of veritable automata, with fixed, harsh faces. Here the man is nothing but a number, a unit functioning among a herd. In France there exists a personnel whose individual qualities contribute to the harmony of the whole. And the same contrast is to be perceived in the relations maintained between the officers and the men. In Prussia, the servility of the soldier has its complement in the brutality of the officer and the non-commissioned officer. In France, the necessary discipline never wholly excludes a certain wholesome familiarity; and it is a charming and inimitable thing, this instinctive and finely graded delicacy which, exercised by superiors to their inferiors, wins respect and affection, and, according to circumstances of time and place, emphasizes distinctions of rank, diminishes them or even effaces them altogether.

But how was this soldier, whom we knew to be a thoroughly human fighter, spirited and enthusiastic in battle, capable of every sacrifice and even of every heroic folly when inspired by the glitter of weapons and the intoxication of the charge—how was he to accommodate himself to the new methods which the enemy, after having seen the first vigour of his attack broken, was to impose during months and years upon all the armies of this tremendous war? His

temperament disposed him to the offensive and the "smashing" of his foe. And the training of his military schools rightly allowed, in the formation of a command, for the admitted superiority of this "*furia francesa*." Well, it was now in no way a question of the classic "*furia*," but of a war at once stagnant, cunning and ferocious, a war of four dimensions—submarine and subterranean, on the surface and in the air—wherein mechanical, physical and chemical science has suddenly modified the rules of strategy, as profoundly as it has, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, transformed the conditions of industry. Instead of the assault of Constantine and the charge of Reischoffen, it had become necessary for the soldier to resign himself, when face to face with an enemy solidly entrenched and supported by a powerful artillery, to live, like him, the life of moles and ants. Success is no longer only to the troops who shall show the greatest "bite," but to those who shall have the best arranged tunnels, the most rapid machine-guns, the most powerful cannon, the most numerous aeroplanes, and the most destructive gas. In the heart of slaughtered towns and whole shattered country-sides, cavalry and infantry are reduced to walking, working and holding their places, in mud or in a dust mingled with filthy rubbish, digging trenches and parallels, filling sand-bags and weaving wire entanglements. Devoured by the flies in summer, by the rats in

winter, by vermin at all seasons, deafened, hustled, infected with disease, one of their only amusements —if they have a trained ear—is to recognize amidst the uproar of the shells and shrapnel, of which they get their full share, the calibre of the projectiles which follow and answer one another—the small for finding the range, the great explosives, bursting on the ground, to smash it and tear it up, the large shrapnel, bursting in the air, to finish off the wounded.

No one will imagine that this sort of war is very much to their taste. They find it almost brutalizing. "Our health is good and our moral too," writes Captain Augustin Cochin, "but there is nothing for the intellect to do." And a simple poilu, Jean Variot, to whom we owe an admirable little book on the *Bois le Prêtre*, remarks also: "For us French, every task which does not consist in driving ahead, in risking one's skin with a laugh, appears to us interminable. That is how we are made!" No matter! they do their part—enduring being shelled included—with a carelessness that is perfectly simple and an ignorance—which is really sublime—of their own greatness. Read this bit of a letter written to his young wife, from the bottom of a trench, in the spring of 1916 and five days before he was killed, by Pierre-Maurice Masson, who had just finished his thesis of Literary History under the shell fire and under the nose of the Boches: "I am almost ashamed to feel so happy in the trenches, when I

think of all that you are suffering far from my side. Here there is nothing, even to the thought of danger, which is not a tonic. Duty appears a little hard, but plain and marked out like the trenches themselves. All the men who are living in this austere, narrow, deep and bristling world know well, they too, that they may not emerge from it except by command; that which confines their steps, confines also their dreams and their desires; they only wish to do what they have to do; they do not feel that they are dragged hither and thither, as when they are resting, by contradictory thoughts; they are wholly devoted to their service, and one sees in their faces that firm, clean and decided look which of itself is a comfort. . . . A collective soul moves through this underground labyrinth—the spirit of courage and pride." The order to go over the parapet comes. The French soldier, for whom, say what one may, the trench is a weariness, finds himself at last under the open sky and upon ground where he can go forwards, with his best native qualities freed; and the enemy also finds him thus, if he has the temerity to wait for him. "Let every man, before advancing, have cast his heart over the parapet." This order which General Nivelle gave to his troops at Verdun—this order which is, by the way a marvellous motto for any man's life—explains for us the whole psychology of the French Army of to-day and of those who are in command of it. Leaders and soldiers understand

one another. The former have the gift of making their will human, I was about to say lovable. And this is why the latter obey and devote themselves whole-heartedly, without any interior revolt, with no machine-gun behind them, nor the bludgeon nor the oaths of the *Feldwebel*.

The community of patriotic duty weaves between the French officer and the humblest soldier under his orders a bond almost fraternal. This bond is stronger than death. Who can read, without being stirred to the core of his being, this letter—and one could find thousands of others just like it—in which Lieutenant Pierre de Gailhard-Bancel announced to a simple peasant woman, the wife of one of his soldiers, the loss which had befallen her: "Your dear Louis, my brother-in-arms, I weep for him with you at this moment. He fell by my side like the gallant soldier he was, mortally wounded by a ball in the chest. . . . It was on the 28th of September at five o'clock in the evening that he fell, killed instantly. The battle in which we were concerned continued. I was forced also to continue to lead my men further away, but I wished that he should lie in consecrated ground. I caused two of his comrades to dig a grave by night in the cemetery. I watched myself by his side, I joined his hands, thinking of you, and I could not keep back my tears as for the last time I gazed on his face, so sweet and tranquil that one would have said he slept. It is this which makes me suppose

that he did not suffer a moment. You see, madame, that I have done for him what I would have done for my brother. It is true that it was as a brother that I loved him, that we all loved him in the company, and seeing him no longer by my side I feel myself alone and helpless."

* * *

Ah! good soldier of France, all honesty, all frankness, all courage, how vain are words to tell you with what admiration we shall all, always, regard you! I know besides that you are suspicious of phrases and that you readily leave to your faithful companion, chaff, the care of replying—and smartly—to the praises which the "brass-hats" bestow upon you. And it is for this reason that I would confine myself here to expressing something of what, for their French comrades, the soldiers of my own country feel, the men of the Belgian Army, militiamen of the old classes, volunteers of the first days of the war, young beardless recruits escaped out of the occupied territory through barrages and rifle shots. Through not having had long preparation for their military life, they are good judges of it. Truly they are a little slow of speech, but what they say has generally strong common sense behind it. No doubt their aversion for what they call "manners" and "pose" leads them into a certain carelessness of conduct, but their heart is in the right place, and it is no less

resolutely faithful to orders than to the friendships of its choice. All this, together with their exploits at Liége and on the Yser, and the valour with which they have fought, now for more than thirty months, separated from everything they love —all this gives perhaps some value to the opinion of our "jas"—to call them by that short, drawling word by which the Belgian soldiers call themselves—a word which evokes at once their accent, their carriage, their decision and their simplicity.

What do they think of the French soldier? If you ask them, they reply with an expressive gesture and a smile. "*Chic types*," they will reply without hesitation. And this bit of international slang—with the accent which is here given to it—says the more because it says so little. In it one divines at once the admiration of our "jas" for the military virtues of the French soldier, for his native elegance, for his courage, quick and patient, which "makes no bones about it," and for his inexhaustible spirit, which with a jest can console itself for any privation.

Good soldier of France, you who have come from all the fields, all the cities, all the streams, all the plains, and all the hills of the Garden of the Earth, you are truly the son of a sane and generous land. You are truly the son of this clever and chivalrous race, whose civilization has shone out upon the two worlds.

Such as, in the noblest hours of our meditations,

we have imagined the rôle of the modern soldier to be, placing unreservedly his moral and physical energies at the service of a truly just cause, even as such we admire you and bless you to-day in this tremendous war which your ideals dominate and which your genius is leading irresistibly towards victory.

Good soldier of France, standing in all your strength against the tottering Barbarian, it is not enough to say that all the soldiers of the Great Entente owe you, each day, a debt for the strength which you lend to their courage by the certainty, the energy and the very gaiety of your own!

This courage—which has the noble modesty of its tears, its blood and its sacrifices—makes the whole world your debtor, since it assures to the men of to-morrow all that is comprised in the self-respect, the happiness and even the motive of living.

AMERICAN SYMPATHY

A speech delivered on the 22nd of February 1915 *at a meeting arranged by the American Club of Paris on Washington's Birthday.*

YOUR EXCELLENCY, MONSIEUR LE PRÉSIDENT
GENTLEMEN,

Why should I not admit it? It is with veritable delight that I have seized this occasion which you have offered to me, by inviting me so kindly to this

meeting, of bringing to you, and in your persons to all your fellow-countrymen, the tribute of gratitude which Belgium owes to the Great American Republic. It is to me a double pleasure to offer you this homage in this fair land of France, whose noble traditions of hospitality you have just been praising so justly, because you have, like us, had experience of them.

Our debt to the United States is of long standing. What is a nation? A collective being, distinct from others, and formed by individuals who are born side by side, and who live, work and suffer in common.

Looking at it in this way, what a difference do we see between these two beings! On the one hand a vast State with the Atlantic and the Pacific as its frontiers, to which a still young race and a territory that has barely begun to be exploited assure a marvellous prosperity to-day, and, in the future, infinite possibilities. On the other hand, this little country, where, on our ancient soil, narrowly restricted in area and with capacities that are fully known, a population has dwelt for centuries, overabundant, rich in tradition, rich in the monuments and treasures of art, and which, knowing nothing of its future, suffers to-day the bitterest wrongs and the most unjust sorrows.

These two countries are, without doubt, very different from one another. Each of them has its special features, its essential characteristics. Yet

the ties which, under the name of patriotism, attach us, both Americans and Belgians, to our respective homelands, are woven, for you as for us, out of the same fibres of the intellect and the affections. The web is equally close. The tissue is equally pure. It is owing to the same ardent desire for justice, the same sacred respect for individual liberty, the same care for a sane democracy, the same love of work and the same thirst for progress, that our country takes rank, after your own, England, France and Germany, as the fifth economic Power of the world. It is the same spirit of close concord between provinces and citizens which is expressed alike in your motto "*E pluribus unum*" and in ours, "*L'union fait la force.*"

What an agreeable task, gentlemen, it would be for me—and how easy, had I the time—to show you with what care the Belgians, when they endeavoured to win their independence in 1789—and in 1830 when they achieved it—studied all that your forefathers had done and how powerfully, together with that of France, the example of the United States contributed to inspire their actions and to decide their destiny.

But it is not into the past that we must look if we are to find the reasons which we have for loving you, for admiring you and for being grateful to you. For six months now, we have been living in the midst of the most frightful crisis that has ever overtaken the modern world. And by an

extraordinary paradox, the only victim in this war of Titans, up to the present, has been a little country, our own, which has been brutally attacked by a formidable military Power which had promised it its protection and sworn to guarantee its safety

With what enthusiasm, with what generosity have you lavished upon us your sympathy! It is true that your country has remained neutral in this war. But we, too, were a neutral country! If we are suffering, it is precisely because we were resolved to abide faithfully by our neutrality, which was not simply voluntary, but which had been imposed upon us as a condition of our international existence.

It is because we did not betray our duty, because we preferred honour to life itself, that to-day, to punish us, they are burning our homes, decimating our people and blackening our character.

Confronted with this spectacle, the Americans, who are honourable people, have not remained unaffected. In the month of September last I was sent by King Albert on a mission to the President of the United States in order to explain our situation to him. I remember that one day, at Washington, one of the leading members of the Government, who had called upon me, but had not found me at home, wrote on his card these simple words: "Neutral, but bravo for the Belgians!" I know that that is the sentiment which moves you also. You

do not believe that neutrality ought to be cowardice, nor that "neutral" should be a synonym for "poltroon." Between humanity and barbarism, between honour and perjury, where is the soul with any pride in it which would resign itself to an indifference that borders upon complicity?

And this American sympathy which has so greatly cheered us, has not, I thank God, remained merely platonic. Every day our population, hemmed in by starvation, is experiencing its kindly effects. And in what words, here, could I adequately express our gratitude? The cries of our little children who were hungry and whom you have fed, the tears of our poor mothers who saw death sitting down by their hearths, and whom you have reassured—there is your reward! I do not believe that history has ever witnessed anything more noble or which has done more to cleanse humanity from the stain of so many horrors of which others to-day are incurring the guilt, than the spectacle of your great nation which, from beyond the ocean, without any compulsion, unless it be that of its heart, is helping to assure material existence to a population of more than seven million inhabitants, at the very hour when another Empire, which, on its part, had sworn to protect us, is oppressing us, starving us and calumniating us.

That is a thing—that act of brotherhood, that noble intervention of your Legation at Brussels and of its admirable head, Mr. Brand Whitlock,

of whom I may be allowed here to express my kindliest recollections—that is a thing which, happen what may, we shall never forget. Last Thursday, at Liége, that energetic town, the whole population expressed this same gratitude to your nation. Every bosom displayed the American colours. We hear that, jealous no doubt of the tribute wherein they read a lesson, silent, but how eloquent! the Germans tore those emblems away. We heard, at the same time, that under this new outrage our fellow-countrymen suffered almost as deeply as in the day when the invader proscribed our own colours.

All homage to the American flag! All homage, too, to that noble figure of George Washington, whose memory this meeting specially recalls.

Three months since, in company of two of my compatriots, Messrs. Hymans and Vandervelde, I made, and it was not for the first time, the pilgrimage to Mount Vernon. What were our sensations when we saw appear, at a turn of the Potomac River, that noble and beautiful little house wherein dwells the memory of your illustrious ancestor! What was our emotion also as we laid upon the tomb of this hero a wreath wherewith your colours and ours were interwoven, and upon which we had had these words written: "Independent Belgium to George Washington, founder of American Independence"! But what, above all, were our feelings when, as we entered the hall of this house which has become

for you all, as it was for Washington, a home, we saw, among so many souvenirs piously preserved and by the side of relics offered formerly to the General by his friend La Fayette, a trophy of five swords! They were the swords which he bequeathed to his nephews. And under this trophy there stand, reproduced from his will, these lines: "I bequeath to you these five swords. Never draw them to shed blood, unless in your own legitimate defence or in that of your country and her rights. And in such a case, never sheathe them; fall and die with your arms in your hands, rather than abandon them or deliver them up."

Ah! but we understood that lesson! What Washington advised, that is what we mean to do, that is what our beloved King is doing now at our head. Michelet said of Kléber: "His face is so much a soldier's, that one grows brave simply by looking at it." In his turn, Paul Bourget said lately of King Albert that one grew more honourable simply by thinking of him. For he is of the moral stock of your own George Washington.

In the name of my King, in the name of the Belgian Government, I salute, gentlemen, in you, the noble American nation; and I ask you, as it were, to personify my tribute of respect and gratitude by saluting the name of the eminent man to whom the great American Republic has confided the direction of her destinies.

THE MORAL TEACHING OF THE WAR

A speech delivered at the Congress of the Society of Social Economics and the Unions of Social Peace, held in Paris on the 5th of June 1916.[1]

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

The poet of the *Metamorphoses* threatens the man who has been surrounded with friends in his prosperity with finding himself all alone in the hour when the sky of his fortunes grows dark.

What a denial has the present lot of Belgium given to this cynical piece of wisdom! The friends who have hastened to approve our conduct, to comfort us and to support us, owe their value at once to their quality and their number. They would suffice,

[1] There were present: Messrs. H. Carton de Wiart, Minister of Justice and President of the Congress; Paul Nourrisson, President of the Society of Social Economics; René Bazin, of the Académie Française; Auguste Isaac, Honorary President of the Lyons Chamber of Commerce; F. Lepelletier, Secretary General of the Society of Social Economics and of the Unions of Social Peace.

There were also on the platform: Messrs. G. Blondel and P. du Maroussem, Vice-Presidents of the Society; G. Ardant, Aug. Béchaux, Maurice Dufourmantelle, Fay, H. Joly, of the Institute; Hubert Valleroux, Prache, Louis Rivière, Baron des Rocours, Souchon, R. Stourm, of the Institute, members of the Executive; the Count de Las Cases, Senator; J. Lerolle, Deputy; J. Jamet, *doyen* of the Faculty of Law; L. Devin, its former President and President of the Central Office of Charitable Works; and Marion, Professor of the College of France.

were it necessary, to maintain and strengthen in our hearts that inflexible patience and resolution which the love of Right and Justice has aroused within them.

Of this comfortable sympathy France, more than any other nation in the world, is giving in full measure. She is doing it with a generosity and a delicacy which are her own peculiar possessions. And for my part I find new proof of this in the very flattering invitation which has brought me here to-day, in the reception which has been accorded to me by an assemblage at once so large and so select, and in those words of welcome which have gained a peculiar value from the moral and scientific authority of a name doubly renowned and doubly respected. May I add that of all these precious words I do not dream of applying so much as one to myself, but that I accept them all, with the deepest gratitude, on behalf of my steadfast and struggling country?

* * *

Allow me also to apply some of them, as your eminent President himself has not failed to do, to the Society of Social Economics of Belgium.

It was born under the protection of your own—and from its earliest moments you have given it the benefit of that delightfully intimate influence which I may be permitted, I hope, at the opening hour of this Congress, which is to occupy itself with family life, and especially with French family life, to emphasize

as one of the greatest benefits, while it is one of the least visible, of all good domestic organization.

I mean the influence of the elder sister or brother, which in no way contends with the authority of the parent, but which has in it, nevertheless, something of the father's power and the mother's tenderness. Since this influence is less stern and less austere, the affection which it inspires may, without weakening itself, receive the most insignificant confidences. Its indulgence is not called upon, as is that of the parent, to keep itself constantly on guard against all temptations to weakness. Occupying a low place in the life of the family, on a level with its own generation, it sees from less high and more close a standpoint the detail of things, and often comprehends, better than any one standing outside could do, the heavy sorrows and the small troubles to which, but yesterday, it was itself a victim.

But, above all, what a power of example, for good or for evil, is that which the elder brother has over the younger! Ask it of these little girls who watch so closely, even when we least suspect it, the ways, the words, even the thoughts of their elder sisters. Ask it, above all, of the meditations and resolves of this schoolboy who, his eyes already open to the claims of duty and his heart already swelling with heroic thoughts, moves along the street by the side of his big soldier-brother, back on leave, has his own pride in those stripes, or that military cross, and to-morrow will endeavour to reproduce in his still

childish games the labours and the deeds of which his elder brother will have told him.

This benevolent influence your institution, older by some years, has never ceased to exert upon our own.

Strengthened by your brotherly affection, your support and your example, the Society of Social Economics of Belgium has grown up faithful as yourselves to the principles and methods of Le Play. Of the just fame which you owe to so many names that are great in social science and social reform, of the legitimate authority which attaches to you from your researches and your discussions, we have enjoyed the reflection, I may say the warmth and the splendour.

So it is that our Society has long taken its place among the foremost learned institutions of our country, and has had the honour to see, closely interested in its work, while he conscientiously prepared himself for his kingly rôle, a young prince in whom our nation loved, even before the war, to behold personified these qualities of reflection and of goodwill, of honour, and energy which she desired for herself. It is around that prince that to-day she stands wholly united, quivering and undaunted, ready to defend her rights and to set her hearthstone free.

So it is that the Society has contributed to the birth and growth of other societies of every kind which, under the warm sun of the liberty of association, have emerged out of our old soil to form a

vegetation singularly vigorous and varied: societies for education and the promotion of good morals, benevolent societies, as those for mutual aid, thrift, co-operation, friendly societies, and other charitable bodies.

So it is that our Society has put its stamp upon the legislation of a country which has been placed by nature at the crossways of the great races and the great nations, and which, as Reclus has said, has become the School of Europe after having for long been what it was fated again to become—its battle-field. This stamp, as you know, is that of old tradition. It demands from individual effort, from the constitutional organization of work, and only to a lesser degree from the law (which, according to the fine definition of Cheysson, is the conscience of those who have none), the secret of that social harmony for which the self-deceivers of the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century looked from the conflict of interests and the free play of egoisms, while another and more recent school, obsessed by the desire for equality, pretended to discover it in the socialization of all the means of production.

Careful to safeguard the power of the family tie, which best binds the citizen to the city, our Society has helped to introduce into our legislation, from the standpoint of interests which are especially those of your Congress, certain ideas which to that Congress are dear: the double vote of the head of the family, respect for his freedom in the matter

of education, the suppression of the forced division of inheritances, exoneration from taxes of the workman's dwelling, division of military service between families, the protection of children and working women, and instruction, both domestic and professional.

In this way it has played a part—a quite disinterested part—in the unending common task of bringing order among the pulsating forces of our young nationality, of regularizing the circulation of the sap through all its branches and of assuring to it full growth towards health and prosperity.

You will not complain, I hope, if I say a word or two, as about a memory of yesterday and a vision of to-morrow, concerning the meetings which, each fortnight, brought together the members of our Society of Social Economics. With what pleasure they used to find themselves in Brussels in that ancient and picturesque Hôtel de Clèves-Ravenstein, there on the hill of the Caudenburg. In the Court of Honour, all rich as it is with its old ivy, the greetings which were exchanged seemed to borrow a certain gravity from the beauty of its rather severe decoration. They became still more discreet in the lower hall, with its deep-set windows, which so admirably exemplify the Romanesque style of the Burgundian period, and its wainscoting, its chimney-piece, its rafters which repeat, endlessly, this rather mysterious motto: "*Plus est en vous*" (More is in you).

Ever solicitous for the fortunes of a society which was the work of his own hands, and just as eager to act as to efface himself, the permanent Secretary, M. Victor Brants, was always the first to arrive. His was the task of arranging the meetings and the discussions, reviving the enthusiasm of the older members, bringing forward the new recruits and cherishing the sacred flame of toil and fellowship. The Society's year closed always with some instructive expedition, and often one or another of your members lent to this the attraction of his presence.

A few years before the war the Society, of which at the time I had the honour to be President, decided to make an excursion into Westphalia and Rhenish Prussia. At Munchen-Gladbach we visited textile factories and metal-works, and the famous *Volksverein* of which Dr. Karl Sonnenschein explained to us the machinery and working, not without indulging in very many compliments to Belgium, whose rôle in the social laboratory he praised highly. We also went to Dusseldorf, and then to Cologne, where we examined certain types of workmen's dwellings and certain institutions created by the Imperial Bureau of Compulsory Industrial Insurance. Besides the officials who received us there, there were some members of the German Centre party and of the German clergy, who did not fail to eulogize the University of Louvain, of which M. Victor Brants was, amongst us, the particular representative.

What did they think, what did they say, these our hosts of yesterday, on the morrow of that unnameable night of the 26th of August 1914, when the German Army, by order of its leaders, deliberately and methodically fired the town of Louvain, delivering to the flames, at the same time as the beautiful College of Saint-Pierre, our University Halls, and, close to them, the rich Library of the University, with its collections, its old printed books, its unedited manuscripts, its records, its gallery of glories from the first days of its foundation, portraits of Rectors, of Chancellors, of illustrious scholars, " with the sight of which," as Cardinal Mercier says, who was there so long a professor, " masters and pupils steeped themselves in a noble tradition and gained fresh energy for their work " ; all that accumulation of wealth, both intellectual, historical and artistic, the fruit of five centuries of toil for ever blotted out !

During the following days, while the flames, skilfully maintained, devoured everything, in every direction, those inhabitants who escaped from the fusillades and the burnings were, some, to the number of eight thousand, shut up in a riding-school, too small for such a crowd, and consequently the theatre of horrible scenes of death and madness ; others, in herds of several thousands, were driven out towards Brussels and Campenhout at the head of German troops, while others still were crowded into cattle-trucks

and despatched into Prussia. Ten thousand unfortunates among whom were old men, women and children, priests and nuns, sick people, madmen escaped from their asylums, were hunted by a drunken soldiery along the road to Tirlemont, already heaped with the corpses of civilians. Harassed, cursed, stripped, they had nothing left, as a witness says, but their eyes to weep with. Victor Brants was of this last group; and if he succeeded earlier than others in escaping from that woeful procession, it was only to learn the news of the still more tragic massacres of Dinant, Aerschot, Andenne and Tamines, and the cowardly murder of two of his colleagues of the University, Professor Lenerz, of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and M. Honoré Ponthière, a learned and generous-hearted man of the first distinction and of whom I am honoured to have been the friend.

To all this, these German intellectuals have answered, as you know: "It is not true that our troops have brutally destroyed Louvain."

The members of the Centre have joined their voices to those of the perjured and the murderers. Worse still, a certain number of them, brought in the wagons of the invader, have installed themselves amongst us, at once accepting or taking their parts in the system of exactions, pillage, persecution, attempts at sowing dissension, and slander, of which our country is still the victim.

That same Dr. Sonnenschein, who came as a war

correspondent of a Cologne newspaper, has been so good as to declare, it is true, that he did not believe the myth of the *francs-tireurs* organized by our village priests. But I have not discovered that he has written a word of even discreet criticism upon all the crimes which he must have verified, while he has not feared to assert, as a thing manifest, that Belgium had, before the war, violated her own neutrality for the advantage of the Triple Entente.

Ah! when all this intoxication of lies and pride has vanished away—and it will soon pass—how will these learned persons, who have not even the excuse of the soldier who acts under orders and with the fever of invasion in his blood, how will they keep themselves from a shudder of shame and fear?

I ask your pardon for having lingered so long on such horrors. But how may I drive away the vision of them or forget this destruction of so many lives, of so much beauty, before which the believer is surprised into saying with the poet:

Dans les cieux, au delà de la sphère des nues,
Peut-être faites-vous des choses inconnues
Où la douleur de l'homme entre comme élément. . . .

* * *

But while it is allowed to us to feel the atrocity of this war, it is above all things necessary that we should be the masters of our emotions, discipline our nerves and strain every effort in the prosecution of our duty: the duty of to-day and the duty

of to-morrow. If it is impossible for us to turn away our thoughts and our eyes from the field of battle and slaughter, we must look beyond this foreground and visualize the future too. It is not enough that this horror should awake impressions within us, for this asks nothing save of our eyes and our ears. It must also bring to birth in us ideas—and more than ideas—resolves, so that the benefit of so much sacrifice and heroism be not lost for mankind and that, from to-day, that programme of restoration and reform which is imposed upon us all should be prepared in the field of morals as in that of economics.

And is not this, besides, the question which to-day excites our curiosity and our goodwill?

Of what is to-morrow to be made?

Philosophers, moralists, journalists, preachers, bring their reply to the Sphinx. Some project into the future the reflection of to-day's anxieties. Others see it through the prism of a glowing imagination. Many yield to the temptation, a common one with the wisest of us, of attributing to the coming generation the virtues which they have failed to discern in their own contemporaries, and then discount the realization in the future of formulæ which they have not been able to realize in the past.

One view, largely held, is that, after the war, there will be a complete revolution in the moral and social order. It has been said: "It is a whole world which will vanish away, in the eruption of

this volcano and under the floods of its lava waves, spewed up from the depths. The longer the war lasts, the more wholly will this world crumble to pieces, the more completely will it destroy itself, with heavy creakings, slow weakenings, and sudden collapses. Thirteen nations are fighting against one another, each convinced that its existence is at stake. More than twenty-five millions of men are under arms. Of these there have already fallen more, and more wealth has been destroyed, than in all the wars of history added together. This vast cataclysm which is heaping up corpses, which is delivering over whole countries to the most horrid torments, which is arresting industry, paralysing the arts and the sciences, imperilling agriculture, is not only a complete disruption of all the ideas which guided the administration of States, their military, financial and diplomatic organizations—it is not only the overthrow of the relations which subsisted between governments, peoples, social classes and political parties. This phenomenon is a profounder one still. All the problems of religion, of law, of morality, are being anew proposed. All the spiritual elements upon which our civilization depended are consuming themselves each day more and more in the great furnace where a new synthesis of humanity is being prepared."

So are to be explained prophecies wherein I cannot help discovering a certain exaggeration.

Truly. I do not believe that, when the war is over,

we will take up our existence at the point where we left it. Each of us has only to recall how he regarded his own country, Europe, the world, life and his own duties in the month of July 1914, and to compare what he thought then with what he thinks to-day.

How many illusions have been shattered! How many of his conceptions have been dissipated! How many sophisms have died!

"The war once at an end," writes Dr. Gustave Le Bon, "we shall find ourselves confronted with a social edifice which our political and religious dissensions had already seriously shaken. One of the most difficult changes will be to get rid of the fatal power of words. With a few popular formulæ concerning progress, pacifism, socialism, universal brotherhood, dangerous rhetoricians masked the weight of those realities under which we were doomed to go down."

It is probable that, after the war, the principal will become more distinct from the accessory and the essential from the formal; that we will introduce into our ideas and conduct more simplicity and self-sacrifice and that experience will have developed in each one of us, at the centre of his conscience and his will, together with an interior principle of obedience to duty, a clearer principle of action without which the first is a vain thing.

It is possible also, as Ferrero believes, that we shall better understand, after the war, all the mis-

takes which the nineteenth century committed when it sought for progress in the quantitative evolution of human values, and that civilization henceforth will assign to humanity a more simple and elevated ideal, nearer to the eternal truth, instead of dragging it, gasping, towards a production and consumption perpetually more abundant, without even imposing upon these abuses those limitations which health, morality and beauty demand.

But we do not imagine, nevertheless, that we shall be other men.

Those who had made or seen the Revolution believed also quite sincerely that humanity was transformed from top to bottom; that the world weary of turning to the right, was beginning its journey over again backwards and that Providence, ripened by experience, had definitely changed its laws.

No. Humanity has remained and will remain itself, and in the man of to-morrow will reappear the man of yesterday, the man of all time, the old Adam, with the same passions, the same capacities for good and evil, the same vices and the same virtues.

And we will see him come to life again with the same astonishment that we feel when we see Nature smile again after the storm.

Last week I was close to the battle-front, and the sun was shining brilliantly. And I saw around those ruined villages which the Battle of the Yser has made famous; in those fields where so much

blood has flowed, where so many shells have fallen, where so many of our little soldiers lie—I saw the Spring taking up again its life-bearing work, and I was amazed, as often before, to see how, in spite of the violence and destructiveness of man, the great calm and peaceful sky continues to lavish upon us its same sunlight, its same flowers, and its same sweet scents. And, thinking of the country over there beyond the trenches, which was quite close to me, and towards which my whole soul yearned, I told myself that there too that which has been undone is striving to recompose itself.

And so, when the whirlwind shall have passed by and the rainbow shines over our devastated fields and our ruined cities, Humanity will continue to obey its essential laws.

Right will always be Right, and conscience always conscience. The great truths will not have changed, nor the great duties of life. And the forces of Good and of Evil will resume their struggle. For alongside of those souls which patriotism will have beautified, those minds which will have been rendered more healthy, those strengthened wills which will appear as the continuation of the moral splendours of to-day, and the payment for our sacrifices, we must expect that there will also remain something of the worse aspects of the war. Kant, who knew his fellow-countrymen well, would have it that war makes more evil spirits than good. It is certain that human morality will for long

remember the spectacle which has been afforded us by the cynical violation of agreements on the part of our enemies and by certain examples of cowardice and selfishness which one or another of the neutral countries has given. It will continue to suffer from the licence which has been granted to the instincts of violence, of cruelty and of rapine. There will remain behind something, too much indeed, of that confusion which establishes itself so readily, in time of war, between the "mine" and the "thine," of the ease with which the debtor escapes his obligations, of the laxity which is born of the dispersal of families, torn from their customs, their occupations and their land.

* * *

But come what may, whether the morrow of the war shows us the conflict of traditional forces or brings to light a quite new order of morals and ideas, the duty of those who associate care for their neighbour with that of their own existence is to watch those symptoms which declare themselves, to penetrate the mystery of the rebirth which is coming, to utilize its energies and to guide its tendencies, with their whole might, in the direction of the good, the true and the beautiful.

Whether the moral revision of to-morrow be complete or partial, whether we have to reconstruct or simply to restore, it is no less certain that the first effort of reform must be directed towards family life.

For any one who knows history and knows from his studies that the family is the principle of every organization of human society, this is as clear as crystal. Religion is the key-stone of the dome of the social edifice, but the family is its corner-stone. Lacking this, there can be no city. For the city has not grown like a centre which, little by little, has developed its sphere about it. The city is nothing in its inception but an agglomeration of small groups, not of individuals, but of families. Without the family there can be no homeland, since the homeland is the result of the union of cities for their common defence.

It is also clear for any one who interrogates a judge who is never mistaken—his conscience. The inward monitor tells each of us plainly that in the effort, each day renewed, whose end is the tomb, there is no better fire for the lighting of our path than the hearth, or a better argument for making us accept the law of work, and the cares and compulsions of life and the need of self-devotion, at the same time, both to our own kindred and to our own country.

Let us rather recall the day when we heard the first cry of our first-born. On that day, did we not understand that henceforth there was something changed in our life? Henceforth man is no longer a wanderer upon the earth. He marches through a new environment towards a defined goal.

In the activity of his career or the intoxication of

his pleasures, he may chance perhaps to deviate from the straight path. But let sorrow come, let the storm break upon his head, and he will seek about for some one to whom to attach himself. And as the drowning man catches at straws, the man whose heart is breaking shelters himself in the weakest of arms, and finds again his courage in the tender love of his own folk. He takes the hand of his wife. He bends over his children. And the strongest emotion which they can feel is to see their father weep. Thus the family is consolidated. It finds in trials and in sorrows which are often desolating the very secret of stability. Though he himself should die, the father of a family knows that the traces of his steps will not be lost in the sand and that others will follow him upon the same path :

Sa veuve et ses petits garderont sa mémoire,
La terre sera douce à cet enfant fidèle.

It suffices to develop and extend this natural sentiment and patriotism is born. For the family affections have quickly demanded more room, the expansion of the houses' walls, and the association of kindred and neighbours with their thoughts and their efforts. And what is the Fatherland—the land of my fathers, says etymology—if not an enlarged family ? What is the spirit of nationality, if not the home extended as far as the frontiers ?

Will you encourage patriotism ? Proceed from

the simple to the elaborate, from the nearest to the less near. For it is folly to wish to impose, all at once, upon the selfish heart of man the Human Race in its entirety, and to hope that all at once he will absorb the whole of which he is a part. The mouthful is too big.

And it is because the same moral laws rule the Fatherland and the family, of which the one is no more than an abridgment of the other, that the patriotic sentiments will, in their turn, attain to their utmost intensity through trial and sacrifice.

In happy times the citizens of one and the same nation live in contact rather than in harmony. In order that they shall feel the same thrill, it is necessary that danger should arise. But then they feel themselves all at once united with those whom the same soil has nurtured, to their living compatriots and their dead and to their children yet to be born. Sharing in the glory and the successes of the best, they suffer at the hands of the foreigner, from the failures of the others. They are ready to defend the heritage of which the patient toil of their ancestors has made them the heirs, or rather the trustees.

If the upheaval is terrific, as is that through which we are passing, it is with a more ready step that millions of men who have been divided hitherto by the barriers of countless rivalries hasten to come together. They look into one another's eyes. They recognize one another. They stretch out their hands. They experience I know not what

wordless communion. They say to one another "My brother!"

Because you understand these primitive truths—which Le Play has so admirably expressed—and grasp them in all their bearings, you have already resolved, in furtherance of the task begun by your Congress in 1915, to study, as the work most essential to the future, the defence and advancement of French family life.

With what attention will your deliberations and conclusions, whose authority the presence of so many eminent men ensures, be observed and understood, to give rise in their turn to new resolves and in their turn to create fruitful works.

* * *

Dare I take advantage of my brief office, and of the circumstances that I am a stranger among you, to address to you not a piece of advice, but a prayer?

You are about to study the French family. Do not be too severe upon it, and say of it nothing bad.

While others boast themselves to be great ones and exalt without measure their relative qualities, there is a phenomenon equally common and even ancient, and that is the tendency of French society to calumniate itself. "Not only is it literature, both romantic and theatrical, which rashly spreads all over the world a deformed image of the French family—the true features of which certain better inspired masters, such as M. René Bazin and M.

Henry Bordeaux, happily reconstitute and defend. But—and you will pardon my frankness—there are also at times moralists or reformers, whose intentions are worthy of all possible praise, but whose vision rather willingly discovers cause for grief; and these contribute to this misconception.

How superior is the French family to the opinion which prevails with regard to it, without and perhaps within the country! And if it has afforded material for some criticism, how fully has it raised itself above it! Believe the words of a foreigner who imagined that he knew it and had loved it for long, and who every day, finding it fairer far than the opinion he had of it, is surprised and moved to the depths of his being by the spectacle of virtue which it affords—and so simply.

It was customary to praise it for its agreeable and brilliant qualities; to pay it tribute for a more attentive care, more anxious than elsewhere, on the part of the mother for her children, for her thrift and moderation, but we hardly suspected its most sterling merits: its earnestness and its unselfishness in responding to duty's call, its forces of energy and of sacrifice.

And see how to-day it is facing immense and prolonged exposure and suffering with a resolution which never falters. Beside every hearth it is cultivating the sublime flower of heroism. How many fathers and mothers are there in this France of whom, in spite of myself, I am thinking—so cruelly

tortured, so courageous. Like the Fatherland itself, the family stands erect, accepting the decisions of its Government without hesitation, its sword and its head held high, never allowing weariness to overcome it nor the barbarian, who already can count on nothing but such weariness, to daunt its vigorous resolution.

And the women of France, with what dignity, what warmth of charity, what a firm endurance they support the valour of your soldiers and add to the force of what they are accomplishing!

They called them a little frivolous. But see with what propriety and tact they have associated, and spontaneously, their existence with the stern realities of war.

A few days ago I was in London. Posters, designed to enlighten the civil population with regard to the precise condition of affairs, had taken the places on all the walls of the motley posters which called volunteers to the defence of the Empire. And I read, repeated to weariness, in letters two feet high, this warning, which appeared to me to have been understood and heeded already:

Extravagance in dress is unpatriotic.

To what Frenchwomen would one think of addressing such a lesson, save a few empty-headed members of a world that is practically cosmopolitan, and who would not understand it?

The fact that the French family is so beautiful

and possesses so many unsuspected resources is no doubt one more reason for defending it better against dangers which might threaten it and risks which are often no more than the reverse of its qualities themselves.

I do not minimize these dangers. They are real enough. We find them, I fancy, in every country, and one cannot be too earnest in combating them. There is the insidious attack of obscenity, through books, the theatre, the fashions, the poster, the newspaper, the Neo-Malthusian propaganda—through a thousand perverse devices which do not even spare childhood. There is gambling, that evil and corrupting influence, which kills all taste for honest work and discredits decency more surely than the sophisms of its worst enemies. There is ignoble alcoholism, one other common enemy, which extinguishes the man and inflames the brute, indefatigable recruiting-sergeant for the prisons, the hospitals, and the lunatic asylums, and which, not content with reaching its own victims, poisons even unto the future generations the very sources of life. There is the rural exodus, which dissociates human labour from the Eternal creative activity and, by dragging the family away from the land, detaches it from society and its laws.

As to the particular risks against which your endeavours will seek to fortify this institution that is so dear to us, am I wrong when I say that they are at times only exaggerations of such and such virtues which are less developed in other lands;

that the weakness of certain parents is only an abuse of their tenderness; that we must blame an extreme care for domestic harmony, a familiarity in which the paternal authority may become submerged; and that the limitation of births is often no more than the false calculation of a shortsighted prevision, jealous to husband revenue for which it looks to unearned increment rather than to honest labour? You will remedy these mistakes, the gravity of which, by the way, I do not seek in the least degree to deny. Some you will remind that all power which abdicates its authority ceases to be obeyed. To others you will demonstrate this truth which Montaigne formulates so concisely in his own delicious language when he writes: "Where life is hard, the abundance and the company of children is a household asset." They are so many new tools and means of acquiring wealth. All these problems will lead you to consider whether there be not reforms to be introduced, if not into the laws—I know too well how much is lacking in the legislation of my own country to commit the indiscretion of considering whether there exist gaps or errors in yours—at least into the customs of your land. These depend upon each one of us rather than upon Parliaments. And to explain my thought by an example, what, for many French families, is the fear of having a child? It is the fear of having a daughter. And what is the fear of having a daughter but the fear of having a *dot* to provide? A great result will be obtained on that day when

parents—even those who have no daughters—shall understand that the tastes, the likings, the natural and social intimacies, the exchange of opinions and beliefs, the qualities and the virtues are, as M. Henri Lavedan says, "other *dots* just as precious as that to which so much prudence offers sacrifices, which thinks itself wise and is only blind."

Finally, you will only have to seek your inspiration from the comforting spectacle of so many French homes of to-day, and to show it to the world, in order to make clear for all the type of those "directing" families which the teaching of Le Play praises so highly, and to raise up imitators of it. There is nothing like example. "There is in example," said Madame Swetchine, "a power which surpasses all others. And without thinking of it, one guides others aright by walking straight oneself."

* * *

While we study these problems with the keen desire to serve at once the family and the Fatherland, our thoughts, without being distracted from their proper work, will be—will they not?—always with those who, deafened by the din of shells and with every faculty engaged upon winning the victory, are working in this same cause.

For it is the family, at the same time as the country, that they are defending and that they are saving by assuring the triumph of Right and Christian civilization—the true stake in this formidable conflict.

It is only on that day when, in the knowledge of

its error and with the avowal of its impotence, there shall crumble into ruin that Kultur of pride and falsehood which does not recognize right as against force nor punishment for crime, that the moral atmosphere of humanity will again become breathable and nations, cities, families and individuals will be able to resume, under a clear sky, the laborious and useful course of their destinies.

BOOKS AND THE WAR

A speech delivered at the General Assembly of the Société Bibliographique, at Paris, on the 7th of June 1916.[1]

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

All the warmth of your reception and the welcome which has been addressed to me by M. Geoffroy de Grandmaison, whose friendship was for me a source of pride before it became to-day a cause of embarrassment, do not suffice to make it clear to me what title I have to address such an audience as this.

[1] M. Carton de Wiart presided: with him on the platform were Mgr. Baudrillart, Rector of the Catholic Institute of Paris; M. Geoffroy de Grandmaison, president of the Société Bibliographique; Baron Guillaume, Minister of Belgium; MM. Alexandre Celier, Prince Louis de Broglie, Baron Angot des Rotours, Count Baguenault de Puchesse, the Abbé Clément, Léon Cornudet, Count de Courson, Pierre de la Gorce, of the French Academy, Count Christian de Kergolay, de Lanzac de Laborie, Gabriel Martin, Canon Pisani, Count de Richemont, Marius Sepet, Henri Tournouër, Members of Council.

But perhaps my very unworthiness may be offered as my excuse. Coming among you as a non-expert, I was about to say as a stranger, I shall be able, without being handicapped by any scruples of delicacy, to bring freely, to your Society and its leaders, praise and congratulation which another who was more closely concerned with its activities and its progress might perhaps not be able to offer to it.

I salute then, with admiration and gratitude, as one of the fairest flowers that have been brought forth in the soil of science by the great sun of devotion, the *Société Bibliographique*, which during nearly half a century has steadily grown in strength and fruitfulness.

At your last general assembly, held two and a half months before the outbreak of war—how far away that date already seems, does it not?—M. Fernand Laudet told you in the clearest, brightest and happiest possible fashion how much that is solid, varied and useful is to be found in the work which you day by day carry on. I shall not attempt, even to confirm it, to speak of the judgment of such a man So many and such weighty authorities have for so long a period insisted upon the importance and proclaimed the benefits of your popular publications, your Almanac, your circulating libraries, and above all your marvellous *Polybiblion*, that no words of mine could truly add anything to what they have said. It should be enough if, in my official capacity, I set the seal of authenticity upon this mass of testimony.

Among these authorities I cannot, however, refrain from naming two who, since they are of my own country, and to-day are both suffering tribulation, are to me peculiarly dear. One is the *Compagnie des Bollandistes*; the other, the *Société Scientifique* of Brussels, to which your own Society has been, and, I am sure, will continue to be, a kind foster-mother. To mention them is to recall to our minds the nameless and inexcusable trials which many of the members, and among these the most illustrious, have undergone and are at this moment, when we are met here together, still suffering. It is also, I know very well, to excite in your imagination, as in my own, the cruel contrast which exists between the regime of liberty under which they developed their strength and the methodical torture, in which they have their share, of a nation which is being scourged in its sons, its wealth, and its monuments.

If I pause a moment upon this thought, do not imagine that it is to make any complaint or to register any regret; for such things are very far from the desire of those valiant hearts to which you have been so good to-day as to offer your sympathy.

In his immortal poem Dante has written:

> *. . . Nessun maggior dolore*
> *Che ricordarsi del tempo felice*
> *Nella miseria. . . .*

"I know no greater sorrow than to recall the days of happiness when one is wretched."

But what may have seemed true to the great Florentine victim of the discords of Italy and of the ingratitude of his own fellow-citizens the experience of to-day denies to those who, in their trials, feel themselves united so closely with all that is honourable and intelligent in humanity. It is not a sorrow for them to think of sacrifices to which they have themselves deliberately consented. On the contrary, they feel I know not how great a pride when they tell themselves that they have suffered for their country and for Justice; I know not what bitter pleasure in being able to oppose to that unjust fate, which they are still called upon for a time to endure, the calm resistance of a blameless conscience.

Though for the moment deprived of this loving collaboration, as, at the same time, of the help of so many men of science, learning and letters, who, for the last two years, have been occupied with their noble duty of soldiers, you have not been willing that your work should thereby suffer interruption. Those amongst you who have been able to do so have done double work. Is it not also to serve your country and our common cause to continue, as you are doing, to spread the light in the darkness which the storm has brought, and to sow, with tireless hand, the seed of truth even upon the fields that have been wasted? Is it not of value to pursue without interruption your task of strengthening the public morals and your work of honest publicity, to which the Latin motto so well applies:

"*Ingenia hominum rempublicam faciunt*"? And is it not, finally, a great public interest which you serve by never ceasing to advance and do honour to the French tongue, that tongue "which" as Veuillot said, "is so bad a vehicle for falsehood," and which has, on the contrary, been the best vehicle of Christian civilization throughout the ages?

But the very usefulness and worth of these efforts, which are continuing your activities of yesterday and assuring their further continuance, can only suffer by comparison with what you have done in the war. Your foresight has understood, your generosity and your ingenious labours have admirably realized, how much common usefulness there can be between those two diametrically opposed things wherein the genius of Victor Hugo delighted—war and books.

At the first glance one sees how opposed to one another these two things are. In all wars, and particularly in this one, books have suffered as have men. Schoolmasters still rightly hold up to the detestation of youth the name of the Caliph Omar, who, in the year 640, destroyed the Library of Alexandria. For having, in a little pocket-book of personal notes, which was found upon him, made one simple comparison between that event and the burning of Louvain University, which he had just witnessed, a young and learned Jesuit, Father Dupierreux was shot, in August 1914, by the apostles of Kultur. But Kultur will pass and, to the eternal shame of Kultur, the words of Father Dupierreux will remain.

But our enemies are not content with destroying books. They make them, after their own fashion. And they make many. What has been the part played in war by the learned men of Germany ever since the days of Frederick II ? They have mounted guard around the throne of the Hohenzollerns.

Perceiving that, by violating the neutrality of Belgium, which he had solemnly sworn to protect, their Kaiser had after all gone too far, the agents and sub-agents of the German propaganda are now exhausting themselves, in the most pedantic way, to efface the effect of the admissions of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg and Herr von Jagow, and to make the world believe that Belgium, before the delivery of the German ultimatum, had failed in her duty to that neutrality. As for the " atrocities," those to which Germany has, much against her will, been forced to resign herself, they were made necessary by the crimes of our population !

All these sophistries and falsehoods are set forth in those superficial articles or thick volumes which are appearing every day in German or in badly executed translations. How many times, when I have been reading them in the original, have I said to myself that one would in vain attempt to reproduce, in the clear and loyal tongue of France, these heavy and pedantic productions, which confound Justice with Violence, and which excuse all crimes by the advantage which a nation may find, or believe that she finds, in committing them. Even as there is a French beauty, which is characterized

by I know not what liveliness and good sense, and by that indefinable quality in which all the others are expressed—I mean, good taste—so there is a certain French truthfulness which is nothing but simplicity and clearness, justice and precision. The French tongue has been for long centuries at the service of this beauty and this truth. Never will it be persuaded to describe as "scraps of paper" compacts of the most sacred kind in which nations engage their word and their honour. Never could it have been guilty of those clumsy and vulgar denials which we find in the "Manifesto of the Intellectuals." And in the universal controversy of which this war is the subject, as in the methods of fighting adopted by the one side and the other, everywhere, every moment, the contrast is made clear between the living, loyal and free flame of the French genius and the thick, stifling fog of a heavy and enslaved national culture.

Assuredly we may look for much from this contrast, which is by no means escaping the attention of the neutral countries. Assuredly we are strangely assisted by the stupidity of our adversaries. Thus, at the same time, they accuse the Belgians of having, before the war, thrown in their fortunes with those of the Triple Entente, and spread abroad everywhere, in an attempt to stir up trouble between us and our great Allies and friends of to-day, extracts from certain diplomatic papers which prove to demonstration the contrary of what they say. And so much clumsiness in intrigue makes one think

of what Pascal said: "How advantageous it is to have to do with people who at the same time use both sides of an argument! One needs nothing but themselves to confound them with."

Nevertheless, we must not leave the field open to them; we must be always on our guard against their dodges, and here, as elsewhere, we must be bold to take the offensive at every opportunity. It is a duty for every man who knows how to handle words or a pen, and is blessed with a certain amount of leisure and with any means of making himself heard in neutral countries, to spread the truth amongst them, to explain the causes of our conduct and our confidence, to expose the slanders by which German propaganda seeks now to rob us even of our honour. In this most seasonable work the Committee of Catholic Propaganda, of which Mgr. Baudrillart is the President, has veritably excelled. You have assisted it in its efforts, and thus have contributed to the force of a movement the precious effects of which I have had many occasions to remark.

It is also your true perception of the objects of propaganda, as well as a very natural sympathy, which has led you to interest yourselves in the fate of the schools in Alsace, to which so many memories attach you and wherein ultimately your hopes will materialize.

But that which ought to dominate, and does in fact dominate, all your work in the war, is your care for the soldier. There is no day in which you do not place in his hands, by sea or by land, those good

companions and those cheerful tonics, good books, companions which he may find again whenever he will—in the trenches, in his bivouac, in his barracks or in hospital.

The chaplains, ours and yours alike, have quickly formed the habit of applying to you. They know that at the head of the *Société Bibliographique* a fortunate coincidence has placed the learned and warm-hearted man who was the principal organizer of the French Military Chaplains in this war.

On the evening when the illustrious Albert de Mun —and permit me in passing to salute the memory of that great Frenchman and great Christian, towards whom the legislation and the social causes of my country owe an imperishable debt of gratitude—on the evening when de Mun, whose was the merit first to light the torch, was compelled to lay it down, M. de Grandmaison received it from his failing hands, and you know with what care he has cherished it and developed its flame.

Since I have been guilty, with an indiscretion for which I offer no excuses, of helping to swell yet further the clientele of the *Société Bibliographique*; since I have often, and always with success, sent to it chaplains, officers, and soldiers of our Army, wounded, sick, prisoners—all so far from their families and their homes—it is my duty to bring to-day to this organization, its President, its committee and its subscribers, whole sheaves of thanks, the weight of which has begun to bow me down, and which to-day's meeting gives me an opportunity, ladies

and gentlemen, of laying at your feet. What good you have done to so many soldiers' souls and hearts! And, by elevating them, by instructing them, or simply by entertaining them, how better fitted you have made them to understand, to accept and to desire those great events in the midst of which they live and die!

One of my friends whom I surprised one day in his dugout, seated beside a bomb-thrower, had a book in his hand. He greeted me by the astonishing question, "Have you read Baruch? He was a great genius." And showing me a few pages of that prophet, who was the companion of the moment, he emphasized for me certain truths whose modern application, I admit, seemed to me to be astonishing, and particularly one passage about the famous giants of great stature and skilful in war. "It is not they," it is written, "whom God has chosen, and He has not taught them the way of wisdom. And they have perished because they had not the true wisdom, they have perished because of their folly."

Another time, I found in a trench an officer—a Frenchman—reading the *Discours sur la Méthode*; and I remembered then that organization, no more than so many other qualities of which they boast so loudly, is not the invention of our enemies.

While you spread the knowledge of the best books of yesterday, you do not forget those of to-day, which provide us with so many remarkable philosophic, political and economic commentaries upon

the war, so many impressionist accounts, and above all so many admirable letters from soldiers. You think also of the books of to-morrow. What these are to be, certain far-sighted critics, and particularly M. Henri Joly and M. André Beaunier, appear to me to have announced with a very great degree of certainty. They believe that our young men who will come back from the front, and who will have pondered over their sufferings, will forget neither those sufferings nor their meditations. For them sentiments and ideas will have acquired a new motion and phrases a new rhythm. These critics foresee that action, by opening for French letters a spring of initiative, of courage and of heroism, will open also a fountain of eloquence and poetry, wherein realism and idealism will both share equally.

We all know, in the old historic homes and above all in our provinces and our country-sides, one or another of those old libraries, well stocked and often dusty, which seem as expressive as the fine faces of certain old men wherein a whole lifetime is reflected. Each generation has contributed to the store by filling some of the shelves. The Great Century is represented by its own majestic classics and the eighteenth by its little battalions of volumes, with their tooled and gilded bindings, dapper, gay, and bold as companies of musketeers. Voltaire, Rousseau, La Harpe, who occupy a good deal of space, make as it were a frontier between two regimes. Here stand Chateaubriand and Benjamin Constant and Staël, who seem like the

advance guard of a new era. On their heels comes crowding in disorder the throng of the romanticists; and grave philosophers and wise historians find themselves with surprise the neighbours of the captains of imaginative literature and the masters of artistic writing. Nearer to ourselves, Taine and Brunetière, to say nothing of the great men who are still alive, are no doubt quite ready to stand a little more closely together in order to welcome the books of to-morrow, wherein already they anticipate the confirmation of their own teaching and aspirations.

On the shelves which are still empty, or those which may become so owing to the emigration to the Allies of the books which will fall out of fashion, what are those new books which we or our children shall arrange? Will these recruits mark a return to classicism? Will they have retained something of that interpenetration which is every day becoming more intimate between the mentalities of the countries of the Grand Alliance? In the domain of science, shall we find an accentuation or a loss of that doubtfully valuable specialization which, when it is too precocious, drains down into valleys perhaps more profound but assuredly more narrow, so many intellectual forces, at the risk of drying up the highest plateaux of human thought?

Who lives, will see.

Meanwhile, the impartial collector makes note of the diplomatic books which follow one another and reply to one another: the blue books, the green

books, the grey books, the orange books—even those white books whose colour of innocence has been selected—who could expect otherwise?—by the Power of falsehood and crime.

There is also another book which is to come, and whose preparation is never at a standstill. This book will bring everything to a focus, and its interest will dominate that of all the rest. This is the terrible and consolatory book wherein all the heroisms and the cowardices, the moral beauties and squalors, the glories and the vengeances shall have their own pages. It is the Book of Judgment:

Liber scriptus proferetur
In quo totum continetur
Unde mundus judicetur,

and the triplet that follows adds:

Nil inultum remanebit.

No action can remain without recompense or punishment, neither the good, nor the best, nor the worst.

And we rely upon this, do we not?

SOLDIER POETS[1]

THE Spirit bloweth where it listeth. How should we be surprised that it has made fruitful our trenches beside the Yser and that we behold there

[1] Introduction to a *Collection of Poems from the Front*, by certain Belgian Officers and Soldiers (Paris, Jouve et Cie).

the flowers of Poetry blossoming among the harvest of Heroism?

Here is a whole sheaf of these flowers of the trenches. Its beauty is moving and its perfume is a new one.

Those who bring it to us are young men for whom Action, however rough and brutal it may be, has not ceased to be the sister of Vision. At that tragic moment when there went up the anguished cry of our violated homeland, the greater part of them, occupied with their studies or their pleasures, hardly knew life save under its peaceful and happy aspects. Some of them had already made a name for themselves in the literary *revues*. Others were still almost children.

Since then all of them have been living the epic of that Belgian Nation which entered into the war out of neither self-interest nor hate, but for Honour —simply. Like scattered seed they have—soon it will be for three years—been carried away in the vortex of this frightful and pathetic hurricane, which can only be stilled when, with their own destinies, the future of the whole human race shall have been made safe.

All of them to-day have learned the business of war—not that adventurous romance, all dash and glitter, which no doubt they supposed it to be when they were at school, but the austere and exhausting lot of the Belgian soldier, with all that is comprised therein of physical privation and mental suffering. They feel that wound which has been opened in

their hearts by their being torn from the beings and the things which they loved, filled to overflowing with a burning hate for the most detestable of enemies. They know the brutalizing march through dust and mud, the uncertainty of food and shelter. They know the drama of the fight, where one escapes from death by a handsbreadth, and, still more exhausting than this drama, the long waits by day and by night in the front trenches, under the freezing rain and the whistling shells.

Le petit jour jaunâtre et mou
Comme une eau lourde entre les sables
Les trouve assis, méconnaissables,
Une quinzaine dans un trou.

As one reads this little book one divines that most of the poems which make it up were born during long meditations on outpost duty or in the trenches. While over his head the hours follow one another, brightening or darkening by the play of light and shade all the sadness and the ruin of the Flemish landscape, how shall the young soldier, let him be never so attentive to his duty, fail to collect, within his subconscious soul, visions and impressions which soon, if he has been stamped with the divine seal of Art, shall blossom forth into works of poetry, of music or of painting? Is not this silent landscape all filled with uncertainty and with hope? Is he not aware in it of the shudder of mystery and the sigh of death? Far away from these desolate plains, over there beyond those floods with their cold reflections of steel, there lies the promised land

there is home, there is the face that he adores. . . .

Le foyer, le secret des vieilles habitudes,
La ville ou le village où le temps les riva,
Les voisins, les amis, la chère quiétude,
Les maisons, les jardins qu'en vain on cultiva,
Et ce qui semblait doux, et ce qui semblait rude !

And when the relief arrives to tear him from his dreams they continue for the young soldier, even unconsciously, to spin their thread. Poetic inspiration—for it is nothing less—accompanies him in his march to the rear, and soon he hears the rhythm which responds, more and more clearly, to the beat of his own footsteps. I see this young soldier, back in camp, with his haversack barely cast off, hastening to note down the emotions and the memories which he hears rising, each moment more distinctly, from the depths of his soul wherein they have germinated. His fingers are still numb with the cold. His comrades are beside him, talking loudly or calling to him. No matter ! See how he takes from beneath his tunic, still wet with the rain or the fog, a little notebook, jealously and tenderly guarded. According to the temperament which is his, he wishes here to express, seriously or gaily, in an heroic or a familiar strain, the thoughts and images which he has conceived during his *tête-à-tête* with duty and danger. Lacking masters and books, his technique, which at times fails for want of experience, endeavours to discover forms of expression worthy to clothe the creations of his vigils and his

valiance. Isolated momentarily from everything that surrounds him, careless even of the risks to which he never ceases to be exposed, see him, apart from everything, save his work. . . . Has any inspiration ever more surely justified the name of " the sacred fire " ? What is poetry, what is lyricism, if it be not the gift of transposing realities on to a higher plane and of expressing their quintessence ? " But here," says Jean Richepin, " onto what higher plane do you hope to transpose *this* reality ? Whatsoever you may do, whatsoever verses you may create or imagine, how great soever be the treasure of words which you have in your head wherewith to clothe your ideas, the ideas and the events which it is yours to translate must ever remain above you and beyond your reach." Ah ! what a noble phalanx of youth—and each day it grows—this war will add to the ranks already thinned, of all those who, accompanying their songs with the French or the Belgian lyre, have wrought to endow Belgium with a national literature. And how happy and proud I am to present to the cultured people of Belgium and elsewhere a few of the best of these soldier-poets !

Soldier-poets. The thing is less novel in Belgium than we imagine. One of the foremost troubadours of his time was that valiant Quènes de Béthune who accompanied Baldwin of Hainault to the Fourth Crusade and who died Lord of Adrianople. In the time of our great Dukes of the West, Jacques de Lalaing, who was known as " the good Flemish

knight," composed many delicious pastorals which make him the disciple of Theocritus and a forerunner of Racan. Is it necessary to mention that great captain of the eighteenth century, who was at the same time one of the most brilliant of its men of letters—Marshal the Prince de Ligne; and that heroic French comedian Jenneval, who, after having composed the words of our Brabançonne, fell singing them in the face of the enemy?

In all the countries of the Entente, the thousand vicissitudes of the Great War of to-day are forging the links of brotherhood between the poet and the soldier. In Italy, Gabriele d'Annunzio has learned nobly to unite those two names. In the British Army, it is a Rupert Brooke, the foremost poet of the last generation, who enlisted during the first days of the war and went to his death, like a new Byron, upon the shores of the Orient. It is of him that our own dear Verhaeren speaks in his *Ailes rouges de la Guerre*:

Le jour qu'il eut compris que les hautes idées
Devenaient peu à peu
L'enjeu
De la lutte vers le futur échafaudee,
Étant poète, il se promit d'être soldat.

In America it is the charming Alan Seeger. Formerly a member of Harvard University, he enlisted in the Foreign Legion. He was killed, one fine day last summer, at Belloy-en-Santerre. But certain of his verses, particularly *Champagne*, are already immortal:

Buvez ! . . . Dans le vin d'or où passe un reflet rose
Laissez plus longuement vos lèvres se poser,
En pensant qu'ils sont morts où la grappe est éclose . . .
Et ce sera pour eux comme un pieux baiser.

In the French Army . . . but here they are legion, from the glorious victims of the early fighting, such as Charles Péguy—

Heureux ceux qui sont morts dans une juste guerre,
Heureux les épis mûrs et les blés moissonnés—

down to those who are still with us, and who have lately produced some very fine work; such as François Porché:

C'est une France peu connue,
Apre et profonde, austère et nue,
Pareille au sol noir des guérets ;
Son cœur que l'emphase incommode
Préfère au ton pompeux de l'ode
L'ardeur des sentiments secrets.

And there, perfectly defined in these few lines, are the special qualities which, without question, will mark the contribution of the Great War to the lyrical wealth of our respective countries: more care, more truth. The new source whence our soldiers draw their inspiration is at once deeper and purer than the ambrosial fountains dear to the Muses in the days before the war.

All our national life is to-day dominated by a sentiment which is not without a sort of serene splendour. This sentiment, which a whole country and a whole army have instinctively obeyed, surrounds itself, in fact, with a veil of reserve and modesty.

It bears a beautiful name—Honour—"a name,"

says Alfred de Vigny, that other soldier-poet, " which one cannot pronounce without growing serious, because at this name he feels something stir in him which is a part of his soul."

This sentiment, which mounts to any sacrifice, has in it something too intimate and too simple for it to accommodate itself to large conventional gestures and magnificent attitudes. On the other hand, the national life and the national work which has drawn its inspiration therefrom during the past three years will discover without doubt some happy audacities. When the storm has calmed down, all those grains which to-day are delivered over to the flail of war, and which are flying about through strange skies, will find again their birthplace. There they shall germinate in furrows whose fecundity the ashes of our heroes and our homes will have still further enriched. How shall a new art not hence arise ? This new art, conceived in the noblest movements of the human soul, who does not already perceive the serene and true beauty which will characterize it ? This art will be far removed from that of a Baudelaire and a Catulle Mendès, which kept school among us about 1880. It will have about it nothing meretricious, highly flavoured, or of impure alloy. It will be deeply human, with less of a literary flavour, perhaps, but with more grip.

I believe too that, unlike our poetry of before the war—which in general had remained faithful to the formulæ of the Parnassians and the Symbolists —this new art will be popular. The visions and the

emotions which it will evoke will have been, very nearly, those of our "jas" and our "piottes," who to-morrow are to become once more our peasants and our workmen. They read but little, I am told. They will read more, when it will be a question, for themselves and their children, of living again through their meditations, their exploits and their suffering of war-time. In any case the rising generation of poets will be nearer to the people, because it will have known them better and will thus remain more sensitive to the instincts of justice and kindness.

Poets and soldiers, all these Belgian youth of Honour and of Sacrifice, will learn their lesson at the same time in the school of the purest Idealism and that of the starkest Realism. What transfigured faces and what beautified souls will they bring back to the dear land which awaits them! With what new virtues and energies will they enrich our race when we set about rebuilding our house! I see again, with Maurice Maeterlinck, "our towns, models of a true and pure family life, dwelling-places of loyal and conscientious activity, of cordial and smiling good-nature, of straightforward welcome, of hands always stretched out, of hearts always open." I see again the spectacle of our fields, our plains, our valleys and our woods. But above all I see, confronting this landscape which we will find desolated and tragic, a new youth, tempered by its sufferings and matured by its meditations. Like the beautiful youth that Victor Rousseau has carved in marble, his shoulders thrown back and his resolute head held

high, it looks life henceforward in the face, without timidity, yet without insolence or braggadocio, but also fearlessly and with the noble consciousness of a duty accomplished and a hope that cannot be destroyed.

FAREWELL TO ÉMILE VERHAEREN

A speech delivered at the funeral of Émile Verhaeren, on the 1st of December 1916, in the Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville at Rouen.

A TRAIN that is to go by night. Travellers who are in a hurry. One of them stumbles and falls between two coaches. . . . They take him out. They pick him up, all broken and bloody. . . . It is Émile Verhaeren. And his last expiring breath speaks these words, "I am dying. My wife! My country!"

Your country! It is, in her name, oh! greatest of our poets, that I come to be present at your burial; and the friendship, penetrated with respect, which I felt for you when you lived, grows timid and hesitates before the public duty which has been laid upon me of saluting your entrance into immortality.

Your country! She wore you like an ornament, as you rejoiced in your pride in her. Thirty years and longer you sang her praises. And your unceasing voice, bitter and tender, fierce and fervent, heard at first with surprise by a few in the intimacy of literary circles, ended, each year more and more broad and sonorous, by being heard by multitudes, at the farthest ends of roads and seas.

Your country! She lives in all your work.

It is Flanders the mystical and it is Flanders the sensual.

It is the time of Van Eyck and it is the school of Rubens.

It is the tumultuous past when

Mettant leur vie aux ordres de la mort
Pour ériger, par blocs de volonté, leur sort,

our communes and our crafts, our belfries and our cathedrals, prepared bit by bit our national unity, by developing, from generation to generation, the love of liberty and respect for justice, by strengthening, from century to century, the will to live together, to fight together, and to die together. None—save perhaps Camille Lemonnier—was more profoundly conscious than were you of the equation of all his being and this varied land, cut through by the Scheldt and the Meuse and climbing so pleasantly from the sands of the North Sea to the plains of Flanders, the green hills of Brabant, and lastly to the rocky glens and tablelands of Ardenne. Over this fertile land hovered, as above a humming hive, the incessant rumour of toil. Some more thoughtful, others more ardent, all the labourers in this common task—workers in flax and in the golden grain, red workers in iron, black workers in coal, whose faces and attitudes were the joy of Constantin Meunier, you understood them and you translated their effort, and your powerful song was as it were measured by the rhythm of their scythes and their shuttles, their hammers and their picks.

Later, the imagination of Émile Verhaeren passes beyond all frontiers. It takes all Humanity for its bride. It summons all its forces, to laugh with all joy and weep with all suffering:

O sainte vision des misères humaines,
Avec quelle angoissante et pathétique ardeur,
Comme on étend les plis retombants d'un suaire
Je vous ai descendus à l'entour de mon cœur!

Very far from reality and everyday life, his lyric power carries him into every region of history or fable. But though his thoughts march naked or veiled in symbols, it is always the homeland that those who know find again in his poems, and the characteristics of his art reveal perpetually, with a brilliance that at times becomes violence, the son of Flanders.

And as if such proofs of loyalty were not enough for him, as if he wished that his work should be dominated and crowned by a more direct testimony to his love for his country, Verhaeren undertakes, in the full maturity of his genius, that monumental pentalogy which, celebrating in turn *Les Tendresses premières*, *La Guirlande des Dunes*, *Les Villes à Pignons*, *Les Héros et les Plaines*, exalts under her many aspects, all equally dear, *Tonte la Flandre*. It is for this especially that Belgium will be grateful to him. In the famous group of Young Belgium, which sprang from the schools of Ghent and Louvain University, and which was guided at first by an ideal and a motto purely æsthetic, Verhaeren was one of those who most largely contributed to create

a national inspiration and a national will. And how can I refrain from recalling here what an influence was exerted upon this fortunate evolution —which was to consolidate and cast glory upon the Fatherland—by a spirit as far-sighted as it was bold and whose teaching I, like Verhaeren, had the honour long to enjoy : my dear master, Edmond Picard, who is still in Belgium ?

But the gratitude of his country has found, in her very misfortunes, a new and still more decisive reason for honouring the poet. Suddenly, brutally threatened, assailed in cowardly fashion, Belgium was cast into a furnace of suffering and glory. Up till then Verhaeren had not known what hate was. With the whole of his tenacious idealism he had believed in humanity. All men and all nations were his friends If he loved and honoured with all his fervent heart France—the bright France, as he is fond of calling her—he had also given a place to Germany in his respect and admiration. Intellectual Germany had shown herself more than attentive to his work. How could the poet, burning for glory, remain insensible to such intoxicating homage ?

One hour ended everything. Germany assassinated his mother.

Pas un instant, il n'hésita
A dominer en lui la dangereuse joie
D'être juste et clément à la race de proie
Qui se prouvait cruelle avec tranquillité ;
Son cerveau libre en fut à tel point révolté
Qu'il fit accueil, porte ouverte,
A la haine innombrable, exaltante et alerte.

In the ears of which of us does not the sound ring, and in whose soul does not the shudder still endure, of that book of yesterday which he wrought out of panting, broken words: *Les Ailes rouges de la Guerre,* dedicated to his Flemish compatriot, his brother in genius and in glory, Maurice Maeterlinck? Who has not thrilled to the accents of *Ceux de Liége,* to his tragic lament for Ypres in flames, to his fierce imprecations against that Power of Darkness, Germany, "maker of twilight":

Tu as voulu tuer dans l'homme l'être humain
Qu'un Dieu presque tremblant avait fait de ses mains
Pour qu'il fut l'ornement et la clarté du monde.

Who has not felt, who does not still feel, the thrill and the comfort of his hymns to Belgium, to France, to Russia and to their valorous soldiers?

The noble wife whom Verhaeren, at the moment of his death, associated with his country—as he had associated her with the immortality of his works in his *Heures claires* and his *Heures d'Après-midi*—she who was the whole joy of his home, has expressed the wish that the great poet should lie in Belgian soil. In Belgian soil, in the Belgium that is free to-day.

Ce n'est qu'un bout de sol dans l'infini du monde
Le Nord
Y déchaîne le vent qui mord.
Ce n'est qu'un peu de terre avec sa mer au bord
Et le déroulement de sa dune inféconde.
Ce n'est qu'un bout de sol étroit
Mais qui renferme encore et sa reine et son roi,
Et l'amour condensé d'un peuple qui les aime.

It is there that he is to lie side by side with our soldiers who have fallen in Honour's cause.

While we wait for the dawn of Victory, he will not cease there to fight with us and for us—with you and for you also, our brothers of France, whom he loved so well and who to-day render him, in the presence of these official authorities and this deeply stirred throng, a homage which draws still closer between us bonds which can never perish.

And nothing will survive of this fleshly tabernacle of Verhaeren, embraced now and reabsorbed by the clay of his Fatherland; but the results of his genius and his effort, caught up in the universal web of things, will still continue to make fairer and more strong the armour of our hopes and our wills.

In a preface which he wrote but the other day, with his customary generosity, for the book of a young Belgian author and soldier, Verhaeren said this:

"The Homeland, which is nothing, through history, but the tendency to union of an immense human group, is constituted by the dead much more than by the living. The latter, thanks to the conflict of their interests, thanks to the clash of their egoisms, are guilty of putting this tendency to union into constant peril. At certain periods of profound peace, these rivalries are not very dangerous, often indeed they are useful and fruitful: the future calls for them.

"But after the cataclysm which we are witnessing, they would be fatal and criminal. The country,

in order to make herself anew, demands that each of us shall have but one and the same goal, just as a factory requires that each lump of coal which is thrown into its furnaces shall serve but the one motive power. The factory cares not what colour their flame may be, nor of what degree the heat may be which they give out. It knows that each does its service, and it is from the combined fire that it asks for heat and strength.

"The necessity for mutual effort must then postpone or at least adjourn all disputes. We must increase our mutual confidence and we must understand one another indulgently. Hands which would never have met must stretch out to one another. We must seek to cultivate not our differences but our resemblances."

We shall remain obedient, greatest of our poets, to the counsels of your wisdom, as we shall be careful of your glory. In the new-born land of to-morrow, as for the crucified nation of to-day, your glorious works shall never cease to shine upon the horizon of our souls like a bright fire that is the symbol of concord, of beauty and of fidelity to the Homeland.

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